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EDITORIALS

The Big New Phase

The big new phase of the war in Southeast Asia was implicit in the concept of Vietnamization. If U.S. troops continued to be withdrawn, but no agreement was reached in Paris, the day was certain to come when Hanoi would decide to put Vietnamization to the test. They have now done so—whereupon it becomes evident that the President's much vaunted options have largely vanished. He had terminated the Paris talks before the present offensive was launched. At the moment, there are only six U.S. combat battalions in Vietnam and they are on guard duty, three at Saigon and three at Danang. Politically speaking, the President no longer has the option of sending combat troops back to Vietnam. Even if he were to return them on the ground of protecting our remaining forces, the reason would be patently phony. The North Vietnamese will make a point of not attacking those six combat battalions, nor will they try to bag one of those four aircraft carriers, which must be tempting targets.

As for the ARVN, it is now up against tough, well-trained and extremely well-equipped troops, supported by artillery, tanks and mobile aircraft defenses. There are, we continue to be told, some good ARVN units, but it is doubtful that even they are a match for the troops they now face, and their morale must be low. So what now? Bomb, of course. The new offensive, the State Department says, is "naked aggression." The enemy has "violated" an agreement that no one can prove exists. So the President will say that we can strike back at selected targets in North Vietnam. But that too is really no option. Air power is effective in Vietnam against civilians, but has yet to win a ground action. If tactical nuclear weapons are used, the Administration will find itself in even deeper trouble, at home and abroad. Moreover, some U.S. planes will be shot down; the air defenses are much better and Russian MIGs, which have been seen in the air, may soon be in action.

There is always the possibility of another showy Nixon spectacular of some kind, to buy a little time and pre-empt the front pages, but the difficulty with that is that the President is committed to journey to Moscow and, for the moment, that about exhausts the public relations razzle-dazzle.

As the President's options decline, the enemy's increase. Their present offensive may not be the big one. They can withdraw, after a bit, and strike again, as some reporters have suggested, in September or October at a date that would be even closer to November 7. They can strike in Laos and Cambodia or open new offensives in Vietnam. At the same time, they are insisting that negotiations be resumed. Even now, at this very late hour, the Administration could probably get a settlement if it would accede to a coalition government in the South. True, Mr. Nixon has painted himself into a very tight corner. It is one thing to forfeit the support of the Ashbrooks and Buckleys; Senators Goldwater and Tower, not to mention the Joint Chiefs, represent a different order of pressure. But despite the political risks, the President's only real option is to settle for a coalition government, minus Thieu.

The Great Hoover Conspiracy

If a spark of decency survives in the federal law-enforcement bureaucracy, it should lose no time in moving to dismiss the ridiculous charges in the Berrigan case. It is now evident—indeed it was evident when the indictments were first returned—that the real conspiracy was the one engineered by the Department of Justice to save face for J. Edgar Hoover who, seeking to impress the gullible members of an appropriation committee, had sounded off about a plot to kidnap Henry Kissinger and commit other mischief. The charges were so preposterous that the only way Hoover could be made to look sane was to indict someone.

A jury, after intensive deliberations and a long and costly trial, has been unable to reach a verdict on the main charges, for the entirely sensible reason that there never was a case against the defendants. The jury's final position was 10 to 2 for acquittal. To retry the case would compound the injustice. And now that the Great Hoover Conspiracy has been thoroughly exposed, sentences should be suspended on the charges against Father Berrigan and Sister Elizabeth McAlister of smuggling letters in and out of prison, of which they are perhaps technically guilty.

What the mistrial proves, beyond the silliness of the charges, is the remarkable point that a jury in Middle America—in a community selected for the trial precisely because it was thought to be thoroughly insulated against anti-war agitation and the virus of dissent—refused to accept the basically political charges which the government leveled against the defendants. The jury has indicated its doubts about the war as well as its mistrust of the government's methods. This was the first political prosecution in which the government had the audacity to base its entire case on the word of an informer, and, worse, an informer who was a convict. The defendants had the benefit of distinguished counsel—Leonard Boudin, Ramsey Clark, Paul O'Dwyer and others—but as Father Berrigan observed, "This jury is quite a jury." What distinguishes this trial from other political trials of the post-1945 period is that a jury, even in a community as conservative as Harrisburg, declined to do the bidding of federal prosecutors. In part, no doubt, it acted as it did because the external pressures on which the prosecution was counting failed to materialize. The carefully induced and artfully cultivated hysteria has suddenly vanished.

CAMPAIGN '72

McGovern Rising

The Wisconsin primary should scotch the notion that Senator McGovern, for all his conceded virtues as a person and merits as a candidate, was never meant to be a winner. His candidacy must now be taken with a new seriousness in the remaining primaries, and he should enjoy a much improved press coverage. More important than the delegates he won are the conclusions that can be drawn from the fact that he won them.

Once again McGovern has demonstrated excellent political judgment and a remarkable capacity for organization and planning. It was good politics for him to take quick,

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effective and extensive advantage of Senator Proxmire's last-minute endorsement. It was good politics to make an across-the-board appeal, conceding no constituency to any rival.

The results should put media campaigns and charismatic candidates in proper perspective. In the absence of real issues and good organization, personality ratings and the relative appeal of one media campaign over another can be important. But surface glamour and media effectiveness avail less than sound organization and the right stress on the real issues. The results should also demonstrate the silliness of attempts, by Scammon and Wattenberg and Kevin Phillips, to "quantify" politics by segmenting the electorate into airtight blocs and divisions. A recent TV program was given over to the voting habits and political behavior of "the average blue-collar worker." There is no such animal—except in the sense, perhaps, that it is possible to strike an average for age, education, income, etc. Blue-collar workers live in a variety of communities, come from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds and, to a degree that the quantifiers will not concede, react differently to a wide variety of appeals. Leadership is a variable; so too are the issues stressed and the manner or style of presentation. In Wisconsin, McGovern drew votes from all sections of the electorate in all parts of the state. He demonstrated, as he had in New Hampshire, that he can attract working-class votes. By the same token, the unreliability of the ethnic appeal was plainly demonstrated. Again, if there are no real issues and the candidates are equally inane, ethnic and religious loyalties can be influential. Or if Russia had invaded Poland, one might have expected "the Polish issue" to be of major concern among Polish-Americans. But Senator Muskie's Catholic and Polish background did not exert a totally hypnotic effect on Milwaukee's Polish-American voters. In fact, McGovern, the son of a Methodist minister, carried Milwaukee's heavily Polish 4th Congressional District, with Wallace, a Southern Protestant of inferentially Anglo-Saxon lineage, in second place and well ahead of Muskie, the Polish-American Catholic. So much for the potency of the ethnic appeal.

The Republican crossover was obviously important. McGovern got some of it, but a fair inference is that the bulk of it went to Wallace and Jackson. If that reading is correct, then the size of Wallace's vote is neither surprising nor particularly significant. Mayor Lindsay has sensibly withdrawn. It is evident now that, while he had no alternative but to change party affiliation, his almost simultaneous candidacy for the Democratic nomination was ill-conceived. Converts are welcome, but converts who come as candidates are not. Lindsay, however, remains a major Democratic asset and can be of real assistance to the party in New York and other states.

The heaviest losers in Wisconsin were Jackson, Muskie and Humphrey. Jackson's campaign there should disqualify him as a contender, for he spent most of his time wooing Republican voters. Not only is he the one Democratic contender who has declined to disclose campaign contributions for the full period to April 7, when the new regulations went into effect—President Nixon has shown similar reticence—but the limited report he was compelled to file in Wisconsin is most revealing. More than

IN THIS ISSUE

April 17, 1972

EDITORIALS

482

ARTICLES

487 Health Insurance Maze: How Not To Get Clobbered — *Rose DeWolf*
489 Let the Patient Beware — *G. C. Thelen, Jr.*
491 Stagnant Dictatorship: The Legacy of Salazar — *Mario Soares*
492 Not Quite Dead: The Pathology of Lake Erie — *Quincy Dadisman*
496 Black and White Together: Coalition Against "Blockbusting" — *Fred Barbash*
497 Illegal Aliens: Scapegoats of Unemployment — *Clay Steinman*

BOOKS & THE ARTS

501 Darling and Milton, eds.: Future Environments of North America — *Michael Kennedy*
502 Song of the Runaway Girl (poem) — *Gary Gildner*
503 American Literature Today: Interview with M. L. Rosenthal, Part 1
504 One Way (poem) — *J. P. White*
506 Winston, Richard and Clara, editors and translators: Letters of Thomas Mann — *Michael Harrington*
506 Prunus Mume (poem) — *Linda Pastan*
507 Hazel: Early Spring — *Louis D. Rubin, Jr.*
508 Theatre — *Harold Clurman*
509 Music — *David Hamilton*
510 A Desire to Fly and Lock Fingers (poem) — *Daniela Gioseffi*

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$200,000 came to his Wisconsin campaign from two "blind" Seattle committees. There is good reason to be curious about Jackson's backers. He himself admits that the activities of Rodney W. Scheyer in his behalf were "an indiscretion," if not a technical violation of the Corrupt Practices Act. Scheyer is a key Boeing executive, a financial control manager supervising company expenditures for a $1 billion Air Force procurement program. Jackson brushed off questions about Scheyer's activities and said that they had been without his or Boeing's authorization. The next day Boeing conceded that it had been aware of what Scheyer was doing in Wisconsin. Senator Muskie's failure to make a good showing after his setback in Florida has knocked him out of the front-runner position and raised doubts, not so much about his stand on issues as about his qualities as a candidate. Humphrey should have run strong in a state where he is well known and has many ties with blacks, organized labor and party regulars. But the more seriously Humphrey takes his own candidacy, the more difficult it is to take him seriously. He seems to forget from one day to the next what he has said on particular issues and his shameful double-switch on bussing raises doubts about his commitment to civil rights, which is of many years' standing and has never been in question until this year.

The results in Wisconsin also show that the process of polarization in the Democratic Party has begun to accelerate. New forces set in motion in 1968 are gathering momentum. A new kind of issue-oriented politics, based on strong rank-and-file involvement, is emerging and a new left-of-Center coalition is in the making. Whether this coalition can prevail at Miami is uncertain. The Democratic Party is in transition, but the controls have not yet shifted. The politics of "disenchantment and protest" has a strong and growing appeal, but the politics of nostalgia is still with us. The old coalitions—Dixiecrats, labor leaders, party regulars and assorted tycoons—have lost strength but are by no means impotent. Wisconsin might also be said to mark the beginning of the end of cold-war politics. Humphrey and Jackson, of course, are still cold warriors and there is a real, if decreasing, cold-war constituency, as well as a coterie of powerful interests with big personal stakes in jingoism. But it is significant that cold-war reflexes played little part in the Wisconsin primary. Few voters could have been enthusiastic about overseas adventures as they listened to the latest news from Vietnam, which was interspersed with political bulletins. The day is coming when, for the first time since 1948, a national campaign will be waged on issues other than how to be beastly to Communist regimes and outspend the Russians on armaments. This year's campaign should mark the turn from the politics of paranoia to the politics of social reality.

CAREY MCWILLIAMS

Keeping the Cupboard Bare

The Nixon economic game plan between now and November 7 is all too clear—he will spend and spend. Time was when Mr. Nixon, sharing President Eisenhower's respect for Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey, retreated from budgetary deficits as from a coiled rattlesnake. But first things come first, and what could take priority over getting re-elected? A big deficit, $38 billion or, some say, $44 billion: who cares about that now? Mr. Nixon will spend impounded funds, where, when and in such amounts as will do him the most good.

Defense funds are burning holes in military pockets. Sen. William Proxmire, the tireless watcher of the Pentagon, got hold of a message from Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, chief of naval operations, which seemed to be urging the Navy to get rid of any loose change before the end of the fiscal year. Called on to explain, Pentagon Comptroller Robert C. Moot, Admiral Zumwalt and other high defense officials insisted that they would never spend for sordid purposes. But Moot added, with more candor than discretion: "There is nothing as difficult as going asking for money when you've already got a pile of unused money."

Secretary Laird has been putting on the pressure to avoid this calamity. He told an office meeting of his aides to keep the programs moving, so that the Defense cupboard would be bare. "He told us," said Moot, "we've got to improve our programs—to do what Congress told us to do."

The drift is clear. The President and the Secretary of Defense demand funds to prevent our enemies, who glower at us from every corner of the globe, from showering us with nuclear bombs or otherwise imperiling our free institutions. Congress, ever fearful of defense-minded voters, lobbyists for aerospace companies, conglomerates, etc., comes across with all that is requested—$76.9 billion for fiscal 1972 as compared with $72.9 billion for fiscal 1971. As a result, there is now an unobligated carry-over of $15 to $17 billion, and that's awkward. Moot insisted that the Pentagon had received no instructions from the Administration to speed up spending, but the cynical might suspect that no instructions are needed.

Spending, however, is not for everyone. The price of beef is a case in point. High beef prices are most conveniently blamed on the "middleman." There are various kinds of middlemen and, unlike farmers, they do not comprise a constituency. The farm states are important to Nixon the candidate, so Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz has been whooping it up for higher farm prices. In point of fact he had promised Mr. Nixon that he would follow this policy: he was appointed for that and nothing else. Consumers are important, too, but they are not a constituency in the sense that farmers are. The consumers will therefore get short shrift.

Pre-election gifts are in fact loans, and they fall due on November 7. Any farmer or cattle grower, particularly any of medium size, who does not realize that, if Nixon is re-elected, farm prices will promptly drop, is a dreamer. He will not be alone, if that is any consolation. If Nixon achieves his heart's desire, he will propose as the remedy for the country's fiscal ills the Value Added Tax. There is nothing to be said for this tax from the consumers' viewpoint, but politically it is great. It is almost impossible to evade, and the suckers are under the illusion that other suckers are paying it.

And if Mr. Nixon loses? Well the mess, including a higher rate of inflation, will belong to the Democrats, while Nixon will be in San Clemente, poring over plans for the Nixon library.

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Any Two Can Play

With President Nixon ready to fly off to Moscow for another of his televised adventures in wonderland, a major shift may be taking place in the balance of power. The Soviet's chief negotiator with the Chinese is back in Peking, and mainland China has resumed its hard line on the United States.

Joseph C. Harsch, *The Christian Science Monitor*'s able diplomatic correspondent, writes: "The most intriguing news in world affairs . . . has been the fact that once more a top Russian diplomat is in Peking. Leonid F. Ilychev is 'chief delegate' on the Russian side in negotiations with the Chinese. . . . He had apparently not been welcome in Peking for some time. But he is back now."

Victor Zorza, the veteran Kremlinologist, observes: "President Nixon's visit to China has pushed the Kremlin to take a big step toward Peking. . . . Brezhnev has offered to subscribe to the same five principles of 'peaceful coexistence' with China that Mr. Nixon did."

Premier Chou En-lai has twice attacked American actions in Indochina. At a banquet for Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia, he said: "It is the international duty of the Chinese people to render all-out support and assistance to the Cambodian and other Indochinese peoples in their war against U. S. aggression. . . . This stand of ours is firm and unshakable. . . . The Chinese people will always unite together, fight together and win victory with the Cambodian, Vietnamese and Lao peoples." The Chinese foreign ministry charged in an unusual statement that "U. S. imperialism has brazenly sent large numbers of South Vietnamese puppet troops to make another flagrant intrusion into Cambodian territory with the support of U. S. Air Force units," and is "obdurately stepping up and dragging out its war of aggression in Indochina."

The People's Daily, the Peking party newspaper, and the Hsin-Hua news agency have been writing of American "war crimes" in Vietnam, "war provocations" in Korea, "military collusion" with Japan, and "acts of aggression" in the Middle East.

The reasons for this switch seem to be: (*1*) President Nixon was invited to Peking to parade his presence to Moscow, and force the Russians to take a less truculent line. China feared that Russia was preparing a military attack, but that if the Kremlin thought a Peking-Washington alliance meant armed moves from the West, it would pause. That pause has occurred, and China sees no further need to pander to the Nixon Administration.

(*2*) The heavy American bombings of North Vietnam, the U.S.-ARVN drive into Cambodia, and recent U. S. moves to help Thailand fight pro-Chinese guerrillas in the North appalled the Chinese and seemed a violation of the spirit of the Peking talks.

(*3*) Zorza suggests that Chou has tough opposition within the country from anti-American segments in the army and Communist Party; Russia has encouraged the opposition by broadcasts to China accusing Chou of "betrayal or abandonment" in the Nixon visit.

The American President's televised clinking of glasses in Peking may be bringing the two Communist giants back together in some guarded form of "peaceful coexistence."

TRISTRAM COFFIN

Conscience of the Bureaucrat

Those who direct large bureaucratic organizations, governmental and private, are increasingly concerned with "leaks" of documents and information, and by the realization that "shredding machines" and even the tightest security measures cannot protect a secret that is against the public interest. This high-level uneasiness is aggravated by the knowledge that today it is fairly easy to get a "leaked" document in front of a large audience. Technology has made it extremely quick and inexpensive to duplicate even voluminous documents in a manner that defies easy detection. Then, too, the appetite for authentic "inside" documents has grown in direct relation to the emphasis on secrecy. If the Freedom of Information Act were effectively enforced, there would be fewer leaks. But given the oppressive atmosphere that exists in too many large bureaucracies, more and more bureaucrats have decided not to abide by the rules, one of which is that the bureaucrat should resign before he blasts the organization.

The trouble is that bureaucrats have families and are humanly concerned with such matters as pensions, fringe benefits and paid vacations. So they have hit upon the tactic of simply getting the information, or some of it, out to the public. In this way they keep their conscience alive and, they hope, they also keep their jobs. It is furtive behavior but, on balance, it does serve the public interest. It is no wonder then that a group of government employees should have bestowed an award on Daniel Ellsberg, or that Jack Anderson should be a runner-up for all manner of journalistic and public service awards.

Recently Robert Mardian, an Assistant Attorney General, complained to a reporter from *The Wall Street Journal* about how easy it is for "revolutionary terrorists" to infiltrate the bureaucracy these days. We are getting, he said, more people in government who feel they should be ruled by a sense of conscience "rather than what the bureaucracy expects of them." On its face, that is an odd complaint. "For my part," Sen. Adlai Stevenson observed (*Congressional Record*, March 24), "I would prefer, and I believe the American people would prefer, that our public servants be guided by conscience. It would be best if conscience and obedience to bureaucratic expectations could coincide. It has been possible in the past—it could be again. These are difficult days for men of conscience. These are days of fat political contributions and careless ethics. But before we carve Mr. Mardian's complaint above the portals of the Department of Justice, we should remember another quotation: 'When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself a public property.' That was Thomas Jefferson. What he said was true then and is today."

Naturally no supervisor likes to feel that his confidence has been betrayed, and no bureaucrat should want to feel that he is an unpaid informer or public spy. But if large bureaucracies create the situations in which what they do is clearly in conflict with the public interest, then they can hardly complain if some bureaucrat or employee feels compelled to give the public an insight into what has happened. Brought face to face with situations of this kind, some men of conscience will resign and say what they feel they must say. Others, in more difficult personal

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situations, will cling to their jobs but find, if they can, some means of alerting the public. Large organizations foster the "undergrounds" from which "leaks" emerge because in no other way can most individuals survive and yet do at least part of what their conscience dictates. Better a clandestine conscience than one totally stifled.

The New Radicals

Ann Arbor

In the same university community that a decade ago spawned SDS, young radicals have staged a minor revolution via the ballot box—winning two City Council seats, and with them the balance of power in Ann Arbor city government. On April 3, the unabashedly left-wing Human Rights Party, whose Ann Arbor branch (the largest in the state) was founded little more than a year ago, swept to victory in two of the city's five wards, and garnered about a quarter of the total city vote.

Despite the scorn of the two major parties, which attacked what they called HRP's "impossible promises," and of the city's major newspaper, the *Ann Arbor News,* which confidently forecast on election day that HRP's only effect would be to siphon off Democratic votes, Nancy Wechsler, a 1971 University of Michigan graduate, and Jerry DeGrieck, a senior and former student government vice president, will hold strategic HRP seats on a council otherwise composed of five Republicans, three Democrats, and a voting Democratic mayor.

But the implications of the victory are of yet greater significance. It is evidence that new voters have a voting pattern distinct from the rest of the electorate and that the student radicalism of the 1960s has not died, but taken new forms. At a Midwestern state university not known for an especially radical student body, at a time of relatively little apparent interest in politics on campus, a substantial majority of newly enfranchised students chose an overtly radical political party over the unusually liberal local Democratic Party.

HRP has made Ann Arbor a three-party city. Even in most of the more conservative, nonstudent areas of this traditionally Republican town of 100,000, it polled a significant vote. Five more councilmen will be elected next year—one from each ward—and if HRP can repeat its performance of this April, thus gaining four of ten council seats, it will be a powerful voice in city politics. The Democrats, whose traditional power base has been undermined, must shudder, but the Republicans are in a sorrier position. For in this city, which had been predominantly Republican for years, the GOP could not score a majority in even the most conservative fifth ward. There, the Republican beat the Democrat by a scant 150 votes, while the HRP candidate got 460 votes—more than 10 per cent of the total. The city's leading Republican said of the HRP showing, "It's sick."

What did those who pulled the HRP lever have in mind? The slogan, "Vote HRP—Vote for Yourself," was doubtless powerful. It epitomized the party's policy of making all decisions at meetings where all present can vote and whose mandates are binding. Student resentment against landlords and local merchants probably contributed to HRP's success. HRP's platform was also appealing, although party leaders admit that some of its planks are unattainable in the near future. The party aims for great expansion of public services, especially of public housing and day-care centers; community control of public services; financing through a steeply graduated income tax (now banned by state law), and an overhaul of drug laws and an end to prosecution for "crimes without victims." These factors, plus the growing feeling—especially among the young—that a coalition of private enterprise and two consensus-oriented political parties does not foster the greatest public good, appear to be responsible for the success of this new radical party. STEVE KOPPMAN

Factional Slanders

At what point in remote time will the American Left finally and fully liberate itself from some at least of the manifestations of "infantile leftism"? One such, vividly preserved in the memory of those whose experience dates from the 1930s, is the way in which small left-wing sectarian groups have habitually slandered one another. For some reason such groups have acted as though they felt that any slander against a rival group was justified if it made "good propaganda."

Apparently the practice has not been abandoned. In the October 19, 1971 *Daily Worker*, George Morris, the Communist Party's national labor secretary, inveighing against "Maoist, Trotskyite and anarchist sections," wrote that the "ringleaders" of a group that "calls itself 'National Caucus of Labor Committees' " were "getting encouragement from very reactionary sources such as employer agencies, police, FBI, CIA, or any of the other instruments for disruption and division in the progressive sectors of the working-class movement." Not very nice, and the caucus vehemently protested, managing in the course of its rebuttal to get in a few cracks at its defamers. Then, on January 20, 1972, Rowland Watts, on behalf of a commission of inquiry consisting of Eric Bentley, Fred J. Cook, Nat Hentoff, Conrad J. Lynn, Dwight Macdonald and Richard Ohmann, requested evidence that would confirm all or any of the charges. There was no response. So on February 9, 1972, Conrad Lynn, acting on behalf of the commission, notified the Communist Party that a hearing would be held on February 23 and that, failing confirmation of the charges or publication of a retraction in the *Daily Worker,* the finding would be against the Communist Party by default. No retraction was made and no appearance entered at the hearing. So the commission found the charges without foundation. Such a procedure is certainly to be preferred to the time-honored practice of giving it back to them, double and in spades. What Left sectarian groups should understand by this time is that the public—even the "Left" public—will no longer view with tolerance these smears and countersmears. Differences between the sects are real enough. Let them be stated, clarified and debated, but without charges of a kind that have made, in times past, a mockery of the idea of free and open debate. If evidence existed that the charges, in this instance, were true, the commission, made up of notably fair-minded individuals, would not have hesitated to issue appropriate findings. As it is, the charges should be dismissed as a cheap smear.

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HEALTH INSURANCE MAZE

HOW NOT TO GET CLOBBERED

ROSE DeWOLF
Miss DeWolf is a news columnist for the Philadelphia Bulletin *and the author of a book on divorce,* The Bonds of Acrimony *(Lippincott).*

Last year alone, the Pennsylvania Insurance Department was asked by some 500 insurance companies doing business in the state to approve 6,033 new varieties of health insurance contract. The department found reasons to deny 2,113 of them, but let pass 3,920 new combinations of coverage, benefits, premiums, language, loopholes, gimmicks and come-ons to be offered for sale to Pennsylvania consumers. That number, of course, is in addition to the thousands of other contracts—with variations of coverage, benefits, premiums, etc.—that have been approved for sale in previous years.

Pennsylvanians are not especially plagued by a dizzying assortment of policies when they shop for health insurance. It is a national state of affairs and, in fact, consumers rarely "shop" for health insurance—because they don't know how. Pennsylvania Insurance Commissioner Herbert Denenberg says he finds it rough to make cost and coverage comparisons in health insurance and he has a Ph.D. in insurance, a staff of experts at his disposal and a practiced eye for fine print. The average consumer is at a total loss, he says, which is why the average consumer is so easily and so often cheated.

Dr. Denenberg is pushing for legislation in Pennsylvania to require standardization of health and accident policies—including medical expense and disability income contracts. How many variations would be required to meet all consumer needs? "About six would cover everything," Denenberg says.

Standard forms would sharpen competition, thereby delivering lower-priced insurance to the public. Standardization would also knock out of the market the narrow-coverage "gimmick" policies that generate premium income for the companies more efficiently than they protect the policyholders. The laws now on the books, says Denenberg, operate to the benefit of the companies and against the interest of the consumers—which, he adds dryly, should come as a surprise to no one. [See DeWolf: "Getting Something for the Money," *The Nation,* November 1, 1971.]

Besides pushing for standardization, Denenberg is moving on two other fronts which he considers equally important: expanding the amount of information the state's insurance department gives the public and expanding the amount of information the insurance company is *required* to give the public. Never since he became insurance commissioner has Denenberg hesitated to offer an opinion of a particular insurance policy—in public and by company name—when asked. "That's a lousy buy," he'll say unblinkingly. "You shouldn't buy that; it's not worth the money." He adds:

> Most regulatory agencies seem to feel they can't give advice about which insurance companies offer the best deals. Most will merely tell the consumers whether or not a particular company is licensed to do business in the state.
>
> I think a regulatory agency owes it to the public to tell them the financial shape a company is in . . . where the good buys are . . . and where the gyps are. That's the least we can do . . . and it's considered revolutionary.

The Pennsylvania Insurance Department has been issuing a series of "shoppers guides" to good and bad buys. The first of them compared the daily room charges of all hospitals in the Philadelphia area. The second compared the premium rates of all the auto insurance companies. (That one, incidentally, showed many people that they could chop their insurance costs in half merely by shopping around.)

Coming up is a guide to life insurance. A guide to health insurance is planned for the future. It is relatively easy, says the department, to make cost comparisons of hospital beds, auto insurance and life insurance because the offerings are roughly similar; but with health insurance it is not merely a matter of sorting apples from oranges; it is more like separating out a whole basket of fruit, much of it rotten.

The information Denenberg feels it is important for the public to know includes such items as:

The commission paid the selling agent for each kind of insurance. Everybody knows that agents push the policy most profitable to them, not necessarily the policy that will be most profitable for the consumer—everybody, that is, but the public.

The premium-benefit ratio. That's the amount of the premium dollar returned to the policyholders in benefits. Pennsylvania Blue Cross, for example, returns about 96¢ on the dollar in direct benefits. Obviously, very little money is siphoned off for administration or advertising, and, since Blue Cross is nonprofit, none is siphoned off for profit. That rates Blue Cross as a good buy.

Commercial companies have lower ratios, the average being about 57¢ on the dollar for individual coverage. But some mail-order health insurance firms pay as little as 20¢ or 30¢ on the dollar. Those would be bad buys.

A low return on the premium dollar can indicate excessive profits, excessive advertising costs, a policy of slow payoff on claims, a high rate of claim rejections, a high rate of cancellations (showing customer dissatisfaction) or all of the above.

The average claim paid under a particular policy. Many policies stress the large maximum amount that could be collected—as much as $50,000 under certain circumstances. The customer tends to overlook the fact that he is not apt to meet those circumstances. (Leonard Woodcock, head of the United Automobile Workers, has referred to a "Buffalo policy—one that pays off when a person is run over by a herd of buffalo on the main street at high noon.") Denenberg points out that one

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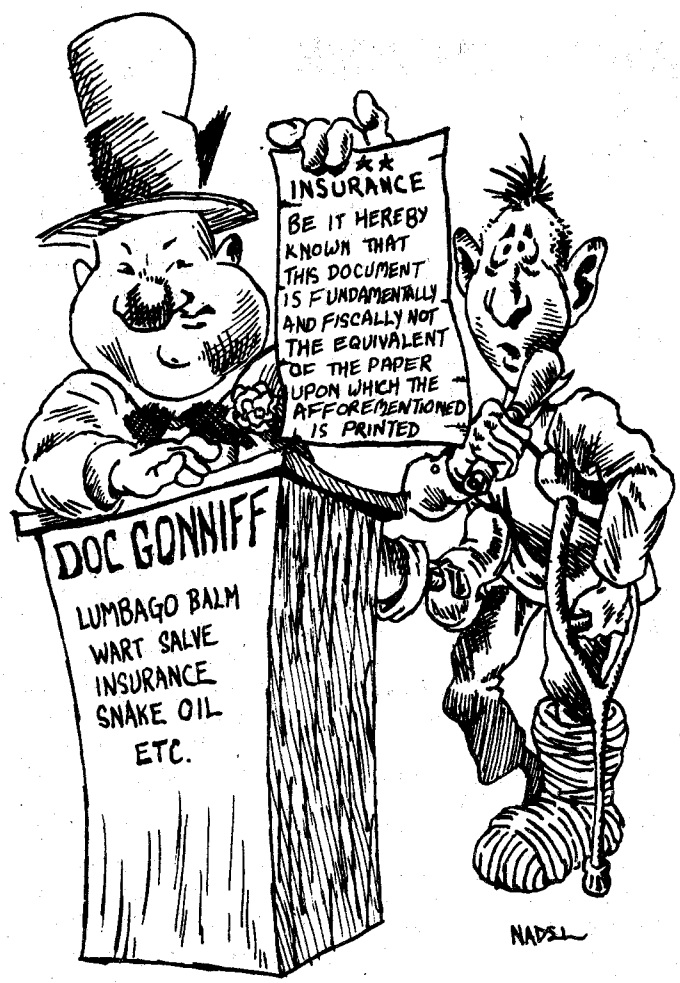
company, which advertises that it pays "as much as $50,000," actually pays only about $175 in the average benefit—an amount that would cover only about 20 per cent of a typical hospital bill.

The disadvantages as well as the advantages of a given policy. Many health and accident policies now offered are intended to supplement other coverage, not to stand on their own. However, this fact is not necessarily made clear to the buyer. (He finds out when the uncovered hospital bill comes in.)

Companies should be made to stress the supplemental nature of some coverage, Denenberg says. If a policy does not have outpatient benefits, it should specifically say so. Exclusions should be specific and clear. "If companies stressed disadvantages of some of these policies as boldly and effectively as they now stress advantages, our problems of policyholder misunderstandings would



largely disappear. Of course, so would many of the policies—and many of the companies. If being forced to tell the truth forces a company out of business, that's the company's problem, not the insurance department's."

As important as regulating what the companies (and the insurance department) should say is regulating what the companies should *not* say. Recent hearings in Pennsylvania (and in other states) have disclosed the laxity in this latter area. Most of the complaints received by state regulatory agencies in the past few years have been concerned with health and accident insurance bought from newspaper and magazine advertising. The companies advertise that they can give "bargain" rates because they sell to a mass market through advertising and do not pay commissions to agents. In fact, says Denenberg, the cost of the ads often far exceeds what other companies pay in commissions, and the premium-benefit ratio of mail-order companies is lower, as a group, than the premium-benefit ratio of health and accident insurance sold in any other way. Madison Avenue hocus-pocus misleads consumers into buying near-worthless coverage. Denenberg proposes the following regulations to protect them:

He would prohibit the use of recommendations and endorsements, unless the company indicates whether or not the person doing the recommending or endorsing has been paid for the compliments—and, if so, how much.

"Dear Friend," begins an ad for the National Home Assurance Company of New York, which features television personality Art Linkletter: "You know me. I wouldn't recommend anything I didn't honestly believe in. And I think National Home's $600-a-month plan is just about the best additional protection you can give your family—especially in these days of rising medical costs."

Denenberg wonders if Art Linkletter's "dear friends" know him quite well enough. He thinks they should be told that this folksy endorser is paid $50,000 a year for his image—and is both a stockholder and director of National Home.

Denenberg and Robert E. Slater, chairman of the board of National Liberty Corporation, the parent company of National Home, got into a verbal duel over the Linkletter ad at the Pennsylvania hearings. Slater did not think such matters were for "public discussion." Denenberg disagreed, and pressed Slater about whether or not Linkletter received $50,000; Slater was less than forthright.

"We have not paid him $50,000 but we may," he said. It developed that he hadn't been paid the full $50,000 yet because that was a yearly retainer and the year wasn't up. Under what circumstances would Linkletter not get the full $50,000?, Denenberg demanded. "He might die," Slater finally answered.

He would prohibit advertisements stating that a policy will pay $50,000, or some such large sum, without specific explanations of what must happen for the jackpot to disgorge.

At the hearings Denenberg pointed to an advertisement by Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co. (the firm that pays $175 on an average claim) and asked its executive vice president, Donald Margolis, if the company had ever paid out the full $50,000 it regularly advertises. Margolis replied that it had not, that the largest payout he knew of was $10,000.

One advertised Union Fidelity policy pays only when the policyholder is in the hospital, explains Denenberg, and the average hospital stay is only about eight days. Thirty days would be a very long stay. To collect $50,000, you would have to stay in a hospital for *five years.* It would be more honest, says the Commissioner, to state frankly that the policy pays $20 a day.

He would insist that advertisements explain clearly the

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limitations included in the policy and when the benefits begin.

A Union Fidelity ad for a policy called "Eldercare" displays a hospital bed and the words: "Here's where most folks over 65 find out, too late, what Medicare does not pay. A long siege of illness could leave you with crippling debts. The Social Security Administration estimates that Medicare will pay less than half of your total health care cost. That's why this plan is so vital. It assures you virtually complete hospital coverage."

Denenberg says that that is not only unclear but downright misleading. It quotes Social Security on "total health care costs," but neither does Eldercare pay for "total health care costs"—it relates only to hospital costs. And it begins to pay only after the $68 deductible and sixty days of Medicare are used up. Thus the likelihood of getting any money from Eldercare is slim. It does not pay for nursing home costs, which are likely to be a major part of "total health care costs."

Many mail-order policies do not begin to pay until after the first four days or eight days or thirty days in hospital, but the buyers do not realize that until they try to collect. Many such policies also narrowly define what is meant by the word "hospital"—what the purchaser thinks is a hospital is not necessarily what the insurance firm will accept as such.

He would insist that exclusions be specified and understood by both parties when the policy goes into effect.

Under ordinary circumstances, a person seeking a health and accident policy must undergo a medical examination or submit a full medical statement, and the company may then write the policy to exclude coverage

LET THE PATIENT BEWARE

G. C. THELEN, Jr.
Mr. Thelen is an investigative reporter, working in Washington for a national news organization.

Blue Shield plans last year disallowed $1 of every $25 in physician bills—4 per cent—because they exceeded the organization's definition of "usual, customary and reasonable" fees. Doctors and their medical societies negotiated this definition of reasonableness with Blue Shield. But the American Medical Association says there is no such thing as overcharge, only fees that vary from low to high.

An even more severe, though less conclusive, case can be made against the doctors by adding other items to the Blue Shield charge reductions. For example, the association rejected $63 million in doctor bills last year on the ground of overutilization. However, Blue Shield couldn't say how much of that represented legitimate but uncovered services—such as yearly physicals—and how much was doctor abuse of available facilities—batteries of diagnostic tests where a few would suffice, excessive treatments, etc.

The Social Security Administration reduced 45.6 per cent of the claims turned in by doctors to Medicare in 1971. The total dollar reduction was $217 million, or 11.5 per cent of the charges. But the 11.5 per cent is again inconclusive: Medicare limits payment to the top fee of 75 per cent of doctors in an area. In a related field, the Social Security Administration has received an average 223 complaints a month about doctors who contracted to accept Medicare checks as full payment, but who now bill aged patients for additional amounts.

Blue Shield is sending investigators into doctors' offices to stop another costly abuse—profiteering on laboratory tests. The culprit is the doctor who farms out tests to inexpensive, automated commercial laboratories, but bills as though the work were done by higher-paid technicians in his own office. "Doctors can have a blood sugar performed for $1 in the lab factories, yet get $5 from Blue Shield," said one Washington internist. "The same goes for a urinalysis. It costs maybe $2 to do a chest X-ray. Blue Shield reimburses $12. Many doctors don't even care if they're paid for the office visit. The gravy is in the tests." (In New York City, the law now requires that, whereas a doctor may charge for drawing blood or taking other samples, and for analyzing the laboratory report, all laboratory work itself must be billed directly to the patient.)

Max Fine, executive director of the Committee for National Health Insurance, maintains that doctors' fees are inflated 20 to 33 per cent. He cites one survey by the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics that found a third of all physicians had raised their charges an average of 21 per cent on the eve of Medicare, for fear of subsequent cost controls. Another survey showed that the fees of all doctors have increased by 39.7 per cent in the past five years, as compared to 25.1 per cent increase in the consumer price index for all goods and services.

Dr. Wesley W. Hall, president of the American Medical Association, disputes Fine. He attributes the rise in physicians' charges to a 10 to 15 per cent annual inflation in the charges to doctors for help, offices and equipment. By Hall's logic, then, after-expense income of doctors should have increased little in recent years. But the Social Security Administration reports that all practicing physicians increased after-expense income 7.8 per cent in 1969 alone, to a median of $40,550. According to *Medical Economics*, the after-expense income of general practitioners rose 49 per cent in the five-year period ending in 1970. In that year, 43 per cent of all GPs netted $40,000 or more after expenses; 13 per cent had earned that much in 1965.

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for an illness or condition which the policyholder has at the time of purchase. Mail-order policies commonly advertise "no medical examination needed," but exclude "pre-existing conditions" in the policy. The company does no investigating until a claim comes in, but when it does the policyholder may be impressed by the diligence of the research. The companies reach back not twelve months but as far as twelve years to find some pre-existing problem that can be related to the current claim.

Some policies seem to offer excellent coverage but the small print totally excludes mental conditions, while tuberculosis, gall bladder, diabetes, cancer, heart and circulatory disease, hernia and sickness resulting in surgery or "disease of the generative organs" are excluded for the first six months.

"Is anything left?" asks Denenberg. He also objects to the sly way in which some companies make an exclusion sound like a bonus. A National Home Life Assurance ad reads: "If you are sick before you take out this policy, you will even be covered for that condition after the policy has been in effect for only two years." Another way to put it is that you *won't* be covered for an existing or pre-existing illness until you have paid two years of premiums.

In general, Denenberg would prohibit deliberately misleading advertising.

"Can you drop me? Can you raise my rates? NO." So reads the large print. But the small print says: "The company promises that it will never adjust your rate unless we take the same action with regard to all policies of this form in your state."

"I'd say that means the answer to the question, 'can you raise my rates?' should be 'yes,'" says Denenberg. "If they raise rates for all policyholders in the state, they raise rates." He took issue, in another case, with a company that used in its ads the phrase "recommended in the *Congressional Record*." A local Congressman had placed some words in praise of the company in the *Record*. It made it seem, complained Denenberg, that the company had government endorsement. He objected also to phony deadlines—"Act now . . . tomorrow will be too late"—designed only to pressure sales. The frequency of repetitions of the ads indicates the deadline isn't serious.

If given the backup legislation, the Insurance Department of Pennsylvania will move to standardize insurance policies—that in itself will rule out gimmick policies. The department will also distribute information and prevent misleading advertising.

That's fine for Pennsylvania, if everything works out, but how does it help residents in other states? Commercial health insurance is offered in the United States by 1,281 companies (up from 980 a decade ago), less than half of which do business in or from Pennsylvania. According to the Social Security Administration, 80 per cent of the civilian population now has some kind of hospitalization insurance; that is about 163 million people, and 126 million of them have commercial, rather than nonprofit, insurance. Would the solution be (*a*) to set up a federal insurance regulatory agency; or (*b*) to switch to a government-sponsored national health insurance plan? Dennenberg's answer is (*a*) no; (*b*) no—at least not yet. He says:

> I recognize that many feel that the state bureaucracies have failed to protect the insurance consumer and that the obvious answer is to turn the problem over to a federal bureaucracy. I think that ignores the fact that the state agencies are improving. Regulators in other states are moving actively and obviously to the side of the consumer. It ignores the very real possibility that a federal bureaucracy can be just as unconcerned, just as slow-moving as a state bureaucracy, if not worse.

Denenberg thinks the federal government should leave regulation to the states, but should set standards for the state agencies to follow.

The federal government could well establish criteria that would eliminate the traps and the confusion. It could require disclosure of the premium-benefit ratio and set a minimum for it, limit the definition of "pre-existing condition" to something treated within the previous one or two years, and so on.

Denenberg says that the federal government may finally be forced to a national health insurance plan, but he is not impressed by the plans currently proposed. The likelihood is, he says, that if Congress enacts some form of national health insurance in the near future, the commercial health insurance carriers will be the backbone of that system, as they are now of the Medicare system:

> Medicare has really screwed things up. It has proven inflationary because Congress simply pours in money without requiring adequate cost and quality control at the same time. You have to pour in more than money to have a program work. We find that the health delivery system has a talent for increasing costs far ahead of its willingness to improve service. And as mere conduits of funds, the insurance companies have no incentive to put their considerable leverage to bear on keeping costs down. The result is disastrous.

Government pressure to keep the cost of insurance down could (Denenberg doesn't say it will) influence the insurance industry to restrain the health delivery people. The other suggestion often heard is that the government should ignore commercial carriers and set up its own health insurance program. To that Denenberg responds:

> Look, I'm in government, and my experience is that government bureaucrats can be just as self-protective as any money-hungry businessmen. I believe in trying to use countervailing forces whenever possible to get honest results. Private interests keep a check on government, the government keeps a check on private interests. If private industry, regulated by government, can't do the job, then the government has to take over. But I think that should be a last step, not a first one. □

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STAGNANT DICTATORSHIP

THE LEGACY OF SALAZAR

MARIO SOARES

Widespread hope for a liberalization of Portugal's dictatorship after the death of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar has given way to general disillusionment, even desperation. Early last month, Francisco de Sá Carneiro, one of the leaders of the regime's new "liberal" wing, a lawyer and a deputy in the "Popular Assembly," acknowledged that Salazar's successor, Premier Marcelo Caetano, has failed to restore any substantial measure of democracy to Portugal. Sá Carneiro is one of a small number of liberal Catholics who ran on the government's ticket in the 1969 National Assembly elections, hoping to participate in the rapid reform of the regime.

In a bitterly frank interview published by *Republica,* the only opposition daily, he charged that Caetano's government and the ruling National Popular Action Party have turned against their original program for liberalization. "At any rate, in my opinion," he said, "they have not up to now instituted the reforms indispensable to an effective observance of personal rights and freedom, or the balance of powers. In fact," he added, "the political situation in Portugal is not changed in any way from what it was in the previous era of the regime."

The group to which he belongs—half a dozen liberal deputies—has fought a futile battle in the National Assembly. "What are we but window dressing?" one of them remarked recently. Sá Carneiro has stated publicly that it is unlikely he will be a candidate for re-election.

The reforms, so called, that the Caetano government has initiated have had no effect on the authoritarian structure of the regime. For example, a much heralded constitutional reform changed the term for Portugal's colonies from "Overseas Provinces" to "Autonomous Regions." This may have been done in response to pressure from Lisbon's NATO allies; but Portugal continues its colonial wars and regards as traitors any who advocate granting self-determination.

The detested political police, PIDE, was abolished with much fanfare, but continues as all-powerful as ever under the new name of Directorate General of Security (DGS). As in Salazar's time, the political police can arrest people without warrants and hold them in prison without trial for periods of six months or longer. Like the PIDE, the DGS interrogates prisoners, who are denied legal aid, and frequently resorts to torture.

A new press law, which fell far short of assuring freedom of the press but was to lift censorship under certain circumstances, has been shelved on the ground of internal unrest. Under pressure from the International Labor Organization and from European trade unions, the govenment has initiated timid reforms in workers' legislation, but these amendments do not go so far as to acknowledge the right to strike or to organize free trade unions. Free elections were permitted only in the government-controlled *Sindicatos,* but sweeping victories for the opposition in even those elections caused panic in the government and led to the arrest of the most active union leaders and the abrogation of such reforms as had been granted.

Economic stagnation and the need to raise Portugal's economy to a European level moved Caetano to bring a new team of technicians into the government, but they have failed to produce any substantial improvement. The principal problem is that Portugal cannot achieve any internal development while the regime pours more than 50 per cent of the budget into defense and security. Portuguese financial and business circles are deeply troubled by the disbanding of the European Free Trade Association, within which Portugal enjoyed special privileges as an underdeveloped country. Attempts are being made to have Portugal admitted to the European Common Market, but there is a general realization of the country's dilemma: its antiquated, colony-oriented economy, which it cannot do without, does not fit the the pattern of the new Europe. The collapse of the government's economic reforms became evident last December when Joao Salgueiro, Under Secretary of Planning, resigned his post.

A new law governing religious freedom has had no real effect except to bring religious associations under the closer control of the Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, the "overtures" which Caetano made to the liberal wing of the Catholic Church by reinstating the Bishop of Oporto, who had been exiled by Salazar, were short-lived. Liberal priests who dare to criticize Portugal's colonial wars are persecuted as fiercely as ever they were under the old dictator. Fr. José da Felicidade Alves, who, with other Catholics, publicly denounced the war in Portuguese Africa, was removed from his parish under pressure from the regime. Another anti-war priest, Mario d'Oliveira, was tried for treason before a political court; he was acquitted, but forced to flee the country. Still worse, the former chancellor of the archdiocese of Luanda, Fr. Joaquim Pinto de Andrade, a black Angolan whom Salazar had jailed or held under house arrest for ten

Mr. Soares was a professor of history and a director of the Colégio Modern in Lisbon from 1952 to 1957. From 1958 to 1970, he practiced law before the Lisbon bar, acting as defense attorney in some of the chief political trials of those years. He has been a leader of the Portuguese Socialist movement since 1965, being active on many committees hostile to the Salazar regime and standing for election to the National Assembly as an opposition candidate in the elections of 1965 and 1969.

Now living in exile in France, Mr. Soares has since 1970 been in charge of courses taught at the University of Vincennes and at the Sorbonne. His *Portugal Muzzled* will be published in Paris this spring.

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years without trial, was brought to trial last year and sentenced to five years in prison, plus security restrictions thereafter which can amount to unlimited detention. Portugal is still a one-party state that tolerates no freedom of expression or association.

Typical of Caetano's inability to carry out his promised program was his handling of my own case. Salazar had jailed me a dozen times for opposing his Fascist-colonialist policies; finally, he sent me into political exile on the island of San Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea. One of Caetano's first moves on coming to power in the fall of 1968 was to set me free. However, a year and a half later, I was again forced into exile, this time for urging an end to the colonial wars and a peace settlement based on self-determination.

In a recent development, Caetano has shown that he wants to do away with even the minimal civil rights tolerated by Salazar: the freedom to form and maintain cooperatives. Decree 520/71 brings all these enterprises under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. This has caused an uproar in the country's twenty-nine cooperatives, but the government is adamant: it will not countenance any kind of public associations—even those of a purely economic or cultural nature.

Caetano's backlash has led increasingly to talks of "neo-Salazarism." The most obvious sign that people can no longer believe that the dictatorship can be thrown off by legal means is the sharp rise in violence. Four activist groups are currently engaged in urban terrorism in protest against the regime and the colonial wars. ARA (Armed Revolutionary Action) has engineered several skillful attacks upon the Lisbon "colonial war machine." The most serious of these was the assault, a year ago, upon the Portuguese military air base of Tancos, when a score of aircraft were destroyed. ARA also engineered the dramatic sabotage of Portugal's central telecommunications installations last June, during the NATO Ministerial Council meeting in Lisbon.

Several years ago, another action group called LUAR (League for Union and Revolutionary Action) robbed the Bank of Portugal of $1 million; it has now announced that it plans new coups, Herminio da Palma Inacio, its leader, having escaped from prison.

The Revolutionary Brigades, which recently carried out acts of sabotage against military installations, are affiliated with the "Patriotic Front," based in Algiers. ARCO (Communist Revolutionary Action), relatively new on the scene, is said to be of Marxist-Leninist orientation and well supplied with weapons.

Given the continuity of intransigent dictatorship under Caetano, the support he has enjoyed from the Nixon Administration is a hard blow to democratic Portuguese. The choice of the Azores for the recent Nixon-Pompidou talks was seized on by Caetano as a personal diplomatic victory. He claimed that the site agreed on by the two national leaders was evidence that his domestic and colonial policies had won international approval. U.S. support of Caetano's authoritarian-colonialist regime was reinforced by the new agreement on the American air base in the Azores. Under its terms, the Portuguese Government is to receive $435 million in loans from the Export-Import Bank.

The Portuguese wonder whether the American people approve the policy of support for dictatorships. Washington is mistaken if it believes that such a policy will foster a liberal evolution. The very opposite occurs: the dictatorship becomes tougher and surer of itself; the situation then becomes explosive as the moderate opposition turns radical. □

NOT QUITE DEAD

THE PATHOLOGY OF LAKE ERIE

QUINCY DADISMAN
Mr. Dadisman writes on environmental subjects for the Milwaukee Sentinel.

"Lake Erie is dead!" Politicians have been saying it, teachers have been preaching it and even fishermen, who should be dubious of any tall tale, have been repeating it. They have all heard it so often that they believe it.

Residents of the Lake Erie basin—nearly half of the people who live around the five Great Lakes—have therefore become fatalistic about their lake. "There's no point," said one, "to trying artificial respiration when the body's already cold and the autopsy completed."

But limnologists—the pathologists who diagnose ailments of lakes—say the obituary is premature. Lake Erie can be revived, they say, if the public will pay for the needed therapy, and if it is administered in time. And sanitary engineers—who fill the limnologists' prescriptions—say the cost wouldn't be excessive when measured against the results the treatment could produce. Water chemists—the lab technicians in the care of ailing lakes—say their prognosis for Lake Erie is bright, if treatment is started soon. It, alone of the Great Lakes, can return to something like the conditions of 100 years ago within one generation.

But all three add: "Lake Erie is an example of what could happen to the other lakes, even big, cold Lake Superior, if we don't watch our step."

Lake Erie was born more than 15,000 years ago; farthest south of the Great Lakes, it is also the oldest. By the time Lake Superior appeared, perhaps as recently as 4000 B.C., Lake Erie was already showing a few of the signs of aging natural to all lakes. The water was a little less clear, a little harder, occupied by a few more fish. It would still have been a good insurance risk, with a

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expectancy carrying it to 100,000 A.D., 98,000 years from now.

But civilization arrived on the shores of Lake Erie 150 years ago, just when the lake was entering what should have been a long and comfortable prime of life. It began to be overfed, and suddenly aged thousands of years, so that today it is at the stage it should not have reached before 95,000 A.D.

A healthy, newborn lake is in scientific terms oligotrophic ("underfed" in Greek); a lake in prime of life is mesotrophic, "moderately fed," and an aging lake is eutrophic, "overfed." The other Great Lakes are either oligotrophic (Superior and Huron), or on the dividing line between oligotrophic and mesotrophic (Michigan and Ontario). Lake Erie, generally, is on the dividing line between mesotrophic and eutrophic.

It isn't qute that simple, of course. It is inaccurate to treat Erie as a single entity. The lake is really three lakes that share a single surface. Geographers speak of its western, central and eastern basins as being, in many respects, separate bodies of water. The western basin (west of a line from Point Pelee, Ont., to Cedar Point, Ohio) is in the worst shape; it is obviously eutrophic. The central basin (east of Point Pelee and west of a line running northwest from Erie, Pa.) is mesotrophic to eutrophic. The eastern basin (east of Erie) is generally mesotrophic, but still has a few oligotrophic characteristics.

One reason for the differences is the volume of water in each of the three basins. The western basin averages 22 feet deep, the central basin nearly 60 feet and the eastern basin more than 75 feet. It's easier to pollute a small amount of water than a large amount, and there's much less water in the shallow western basin than in the other two.

Also the basins relate to one another. One way that sewage treatment plants remove pollutants is to direct the waste water through settling tanks. Lake Erie's three basins serve as successive settling tanks for the pollutants poured into them by the Detroit-Windsor-Toledo industrial area. The western basin catches perhaps 60 per cent of the pollutants, the central basin another 20 per cent and the eastern basin another 10 per cent.

In the summer of 1970, National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientists teamed up with water scientists to try to learn just what happens in the lake. NASA built a special underwater camera for scientists, Noel M. Burns of the Canada Centre for Inland Waters and Curtiss Ross of the Lake Erie office of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. Burns and Ross left the camera and other instruments on the floor of the central basin, which is just beginning to demonstrate some of the same behavior as the western basin, to record events in July and August. They found:

¶In July, a massive algal bloom concentrated almost all the phosphorus that was free in the water. (An element essential to plant growth, phosphorus spews into the lake in sewage and waste fertilizer.) As the algae died, they formed a layer of dead material nearly a tenth of an inch thick on the lake bottom.

¶As the algae bloomed, they took up the available oxygen in the lower water levels. By August 12, the water had no oxygen and dead smelt littered the bottom.

¶When the bottom water went anaerobic—lost all its oxygen—the bottom sediments released phosphorus eleven times as fast as it had collected there.

In other words, the lake was polluting itself. The camera told the story. When there was plenty of oxygen, a thin film of reddish brown iron oxide (rust) formed on the bottom. Rust is insoluble in water. The rust kept the soluble phosphorus in the sediment apart from the water.

But when the lake went anaerobic, the bottom turned greenish brown. Under anaerobic conditions, the iron oxide broke up, releasing its oxygen, and allowed water and phosphorus to meet. The conclusion was self-evident. Lake Erie loses a little of its phosphorus content over Niagara Falls every year. If the phosphorus input could be cut off, the self-pollution cycle could be broken and the lake would eventually clean itself up to the point where fish could again live year around in the western basin.

Ross and Burns made their calculations and decided: "Phosphorus input to Lake Erie must be reduced immediately. If this is done, a quick improvement in the condition of the lake can be expected; if it is not done, the rate of deterioration of the lake is such that within ten years the lake will be of little value to the population along its shores, other than providing the means of cheap transportation of bulk commodities."

Lake Erie has a lot of other problems. For instance, the bottom mud of the western basin contains several tons of mercury. It came into the lake with waste water discharged by chloralkali plants on both banks of the St. Clair River, the international boundary above Detroit. And the history of how the lake got into so much trouble can be read in that pool of mercury.

Chloralkali plants break down common salt, sodium chloride, and water to make chlorine and caustic soda, sodium hydroxide. They do it by running electricity through tanks—called "cells"—of brine. The bottom of each cell is covered with mercury, a good conductor of electricity. A little mercury escapes each time chlorine and caustic soda are drawn off. Then, as they are purified, the stray mercury gets into the wash water. It used to be tossed out with the wash water, but today the chloralkali plants are trapping it.

The people who built the first sewers in the industrial cities around Lake Erie looked out on that immense expanse of water and reached what, in their day, was a rational solution: they dumped the sewage into the lake. Dilution is the solution to pollution, a catchy phrase still occasionally heard from industrialists. The people who built the chloralkali plants acted from the same kind of ignorance. Although mercury has been recognized as a poison for centuries, they believed it so heavy that it would drop deep into the bottom mud and stay put.

The discovery that it doesn't stay put came in the mid-1960s, when Japanese doctors found that shellfish contaminated by mercury were killing residents of an area near a chloralkali plant. A little later, Swedish scientists found similar, though less lethal, pollution in their country. Lake Erie's mercury problem was diagnosed in 1970 by a young Swedish water chemist studying at the University of Western Ontario in London.

When he found mercury in fish taken from Lake St.

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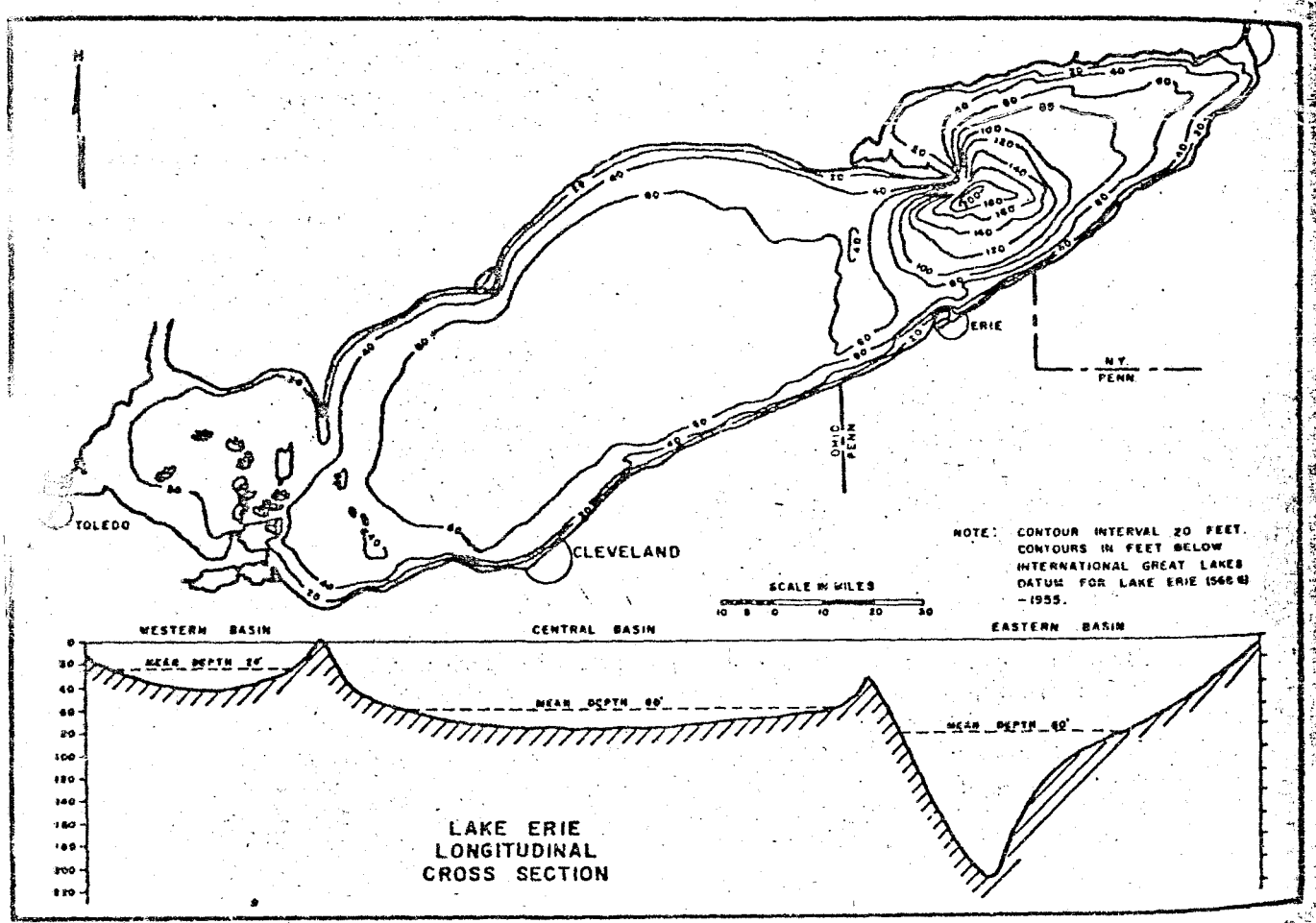
fair, to hook up an old tradition that has been a big art of the problem of the Great Lakes, and still drags across-the-boundary action to solve pollution problems. The tradition is grounded in three political facts: (*1*) he United States and Canada are both federations. If a deration is to work, its parts must renounce control of eign affairs to the central government. (*2*) A century . American politicians won votes by twisting the British 's tail. Today, Canadian politicians entertain their ituents by grabbing handfuls of eagle feathers. Part game is to devise political rhetoric that will draw ose at home without raising a gale abroad. (*3*) Sel- mentioned, but a factor for both federal governments he economic power of the Great Lakes basin. The oductive hearts of both countries depend on Great Lakes ter for industrial processing and transportation. That t is forever compromising the sanctity of the boundary, the dismay of nationalists on either side of it.

So a typical complaint by an Ohio resident about an tario pollution problem in Lake Erie follows this route: Ohioan would complain to his local health board, ich would notify the Ohio Board of Health in Columbus, ich would inform the governor's office, which would proach the State Department in Washington, which ld communicate with the International Joint Commis- in Washington, which would notify the International Commission office in Ottawa, which would, etc., Toronto to the polluter. The process often takes six months for a complaint and an answer to make round trip.

The International Joint Commission was formed handle trans-boundary cooperation over navigation. On in recent years—the last decade, or so—has it given ser- ous attention to pollution problems, other than to pass them on to the State Department or Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The mercury crisis marked the first break with the protocol described above, because Ontario water scientists recognized their discovery as an immediate threat to human life. Unofficially, but effectively, they picked up the phone and called Lansing, informing Michigan water chemists of their findings and telling them where, and how, they had detected mercury. Meanwhile, Ontario banned fishing in the mercury-polluted area.

The crisis also produced an innovation that could have more permanent effects: in September 1970, John Robarts, then Premier of Ontario, invited the premiers of Manitoba and Quebec and the governors of the eight Great Lakes states to a Great Lakes Environmental Conference at Toronto. The seating arrangement at the conference told its own story. The governors were arranged in a semi-circle, backed by their pollution control advisers. The two representatives of the two federal governments were seated in the row with the advisers, behind the governors and premiers.



From Report of Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, August 1968

Lake Erie Bottom Topography

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Robarts emphasized the blocks that international protocol put in the way of direct state-provincial action, but added that there was nothing to prevent a lot of informal conversation about mutual problems, or to stop researchers on either side of the border from telling each other about what they were doing. The Great Lakes Commission office in Ann Arbor, Mich., was designated the clearinghouse for trading such data.

At the second meeting of the conference, in August of 1971, at Mackinac Island, the governors and premiers agreed that the Great Lakes (including Lake Michigan, which is entirely within the United States) must be considered an enviromental unit—"an interdependent ecosystem"—if pollution problems are to be solved.

But the picture of cooperation has been dimmed, mostly by shadows out of Washington. There is reason to believe that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fails to realize that the Great Lakes aren't salt water and that rules that would protect the oceans aren't good enough for the lakes. This confusion showed up most vividly at a series of hearings last year in Chicago on rules for reducing pollution from ships, which have dumped raw sewage overboard for years.

Most of the Great Lakes states, and Ontario, require pleasure craft—thousands are used on the lakes—to have holding tanks for sewage, which is discharged into treatment plants when they reach port. They wanted the federal government to apply the same rule to ships operating on the lakes. But EPA spokesmen at the hearings made it clear that the agency has no such intention. Their attitude, paraphrased, was, "What's good enough for the oceans, where we have so much water to protect, certainly should be good enough for the lakes." Although environmentalists squalled, it appears that ships operating in the lakes will continue to discharge their sewage overboard, although perhaps after some preliminary treatment.

The problem is considerable—there aren't many places around the lakes where sewage can be pumped from a vessel, and there isn't much room aboard ship to install holding tanks—but the solution is essentially money. State water pollution experts left the hearing with the notion that EPA had never considered the danger of an epidemic implicit in the possibility that a sewage discharging ship might anchor near one of the hundreds of municipal water intake cribs along the shores of the lakes.

Money is the key to all the Great Lakes problems and especially to Lake Erie's problems. Money is needed to build new sewage treatment plants; new settling basins to catch the debris carried in storm runoff; to teach farmers how to keep agricultural wastes out of the water and, most important, to support research that will show how to avoid future trouble. But Washington, many conservationists say, is looking for bargains, with only $141 million in Mr. Nixon's 1973 budget proposals for EPA's share of the sewage treatment plant building boom.

Canadian newspapers have been pointing an accusing finger for several months, with one editorial widely reprinted across Canada:

> What happened to that "breakthrough" agreement between Canada and the United States that was going to beat the problem of pollution in the Great Lakes?
>
> After a series of international meetings last summer, agreement was thought imminent. President Nixon and Prime Minister Trudeau were expected to sign in October. They did not sign, and the pollution-conscious minority of the 35 million North Americans who live around the lakes . . . is getting edgy about it.
>
> It is known that the Americans have stalled the agreement. . . . There are three reasons:
>
> The first is inferior American technology. U.S. sewage and pollution methods are years behind Canadian ones.
>
> The second reason is the war over phosphates. Canada has cut the phosphate content of household detergents by 80 per cent and promised to eliminate it by the end of 1972. The United States has not done this.
>
> But it is known that the decay of the lakes can't be stopped unless man stops dumping thousands of tons of phosphates every year.
>
> The third—and most important—reason is U.S. politics. The Senate has passed the Muskie bill, which would spend $12.5 billion on pollution control—far more than the Nixon Administration wants to spend. . . .
>
> Some of Canada's negotiators feel they will get agreement this year and they will be in partnership with U.S. agencies that have made a great leap forward. . . .
>
> However optimistic diplomats may be, the American record does not permit us to leave anything to trust. Ottawa should . . . maintain unremitting pressure on the Americans to come to a conclusive agreement.

The editorial first appeared in the *Toronto Star*—published in the most anti-American of Canadian cities—but there's a lot of truth amid the scattered eagle feathers.

In general, Canadian sewage treatment plants are superior to those on the American side. American plants are generally older because few Canadian cities gave much attention to sewage treatment before World War II.

The EPA, in response to terrific pressure from the soap and detergent industry, has refused to go along with a ban on phosphate detergents. The key elements to plant growth—and algae are plants—are phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium. Potassium and nitrogen are uncontrollable because their sources are for the most part independent of man's activities. Nitrogen, for instance, spills from the sky by the millions of tons in every thunderstorm. Phosphorus, however, can be controlled, principally by keeping it out of sewage in the first place, or by taking it out in sewage treatment plants. And if it is controlled, plant growth will be controlled. Taking phosphorus out of sewage is expensive, but practical, and the states bordering Lake Erie have agreed to reduce their phosphorus loading to the lake by 80 per cent by the end of next year. But that may not be enough.

There's a long-standing argument about using phosphates in synthetic detergents. Some nonphosphate detergents have been made with nitrogen compounds, but they can be hazardous to people using them. Others have been made with nonpoisonous phosphorus substitutes, but they are expensive. The soap and detergent industry argues that it's easier and safer to remove the phosphorus in sewage treatment than in the manufacturing process. EPA agrees. (The simple answer—soap—isn't so simple in the Great Lakes basin, where most of the water is very hard, despite municipal waterworks' softeners.)

Politics are a factor in another way. Many environmentalists are liberals, and those with a right-wing ben

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sound like liberals when they begin criticizing industry for its procrastination about pollution. They have little in common with a Republican Administration.

Senator Muskie's standing with the environmental movement is high; many environmentalists say he is one of a half dozen Senators who really understand what they are talking about. As long as he aims to succeed Mr. Nixon, his ideas will not be embraced by the Administration.

The result has been a semi-schizophrenia in the government's attitude toward pollution. EPA has issued a few 180-day orders (in effect, orders to clean up or close down in six months) around the lakes, but environmentalists say no plant has actually been closed.

EPA administrator William D. Ruckelshaus has talked tough, on occasion, but he approved the phosphate decision and frequently refers to the number of jobs that may be lost if industry is required to stop polluting. The possibility that those job losses would be canceled by increased employment in making pollution control equipment is seldom, if ever, mentioned. Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans, spokesman for business in official Washington, has been droning a litany: Don't move too fast, don't upset the boat.

Meanwhile, the Cuyahoga River rolls day and night through downtown Cleveland, carrying its burden of pollution to Lake Erie. Clevelanders joke about not smoking near its banks, for fear of setting the oil it carries afire. There is more than a little reality to their jokes—perhaps the Cuyahoga is inflammable. □

BLACK AND WHITE TOGETHER

Coalition Against 'Blockbusting'

FRED BARBASH
Mr. Barbash is a reporter on the Baltimore Sun, *covering urban problems.*

Chicago

For the past six years or so, urban neighborhoods have been mobilizing in many of the country's large cities. The growth of new neighborhood organizations has been from the bottom up: block by block and neighborhood by neighborhood. Organizations which have existed for years—"improvement" associations, church-related groups, ethnic societies and other newer groups—have formed broad-based coalitions to encompass whole geographic sections of cities. The strongest examples are in Baltimore and Chicago, the Northeast Community Organization in the former and the Westside Coalition in the latter.

There are impressive groups also in Detroit, Kansas City, Newark, Gary, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Milwaukee. The links between them, on a national scale, have been the friendly but tenuous connections among professional organizers, including young ministers, priests and seminarians. But on March 17, 18 and 19, most of these groups got together for the first time at St. Sylvester's Parish School on Chicago's West Side and formed a national coalition of neighborhoods.

The nearby neighborhood of Austin—and this explains what the conference was about—had forty black residents in 1960 and about 40,000 in 1970. And the villains, the conspirators, who have brought about such rapid change were identified clearly by Walter Brooks, a black man who heads Baltimore's Northeast Community Organization: "The real enemies of our neighborhoods are the unscrupulous realtor, the exploitative speculator, the discriminatory lending and insurance institutions, the unjust FHA, and the hidden, but all-powerful federal banking institutions."

The conference (about 150 blacks, 150 Spanish-speaking and 700 whites) opened with a zeal that was to be characteristic of the conference when Ed Stefaniak, of Chicago, mounted the podium: "We all have to be missionaries. It means saving your communities. And together, we're going to do something that's even greater: we're going to save this nation." A thousand people from fifty cities cheered agreement.

The "changing" and then disintegration of a neighborhood is not natural, these groups are convinced, but rather the product of alliance among the interests Brooks identified. The insurance companies "redline" a changing neighborhood, and thereafter nobody can get homeowners or automobile insurance. The real estate salesmen peddle panic—"the niggers are coming"—to frighten white homeowners. They then buy up the houses at cut rate, and sell them to black or Spanish-speaking families at inflated prices. The FHA backs it all up, inspecting and insuring mortgages on homes in need of repair which are sold to the blacks, refusing to guarantee mortgages in "nice" areas. The Savings & Loans finance the process—and refuse conventional loans in "changing" neighborhoods.

"Both the white family, which has lost its home and most of its savings," said Brooks, "and the black family, which finds itself heavily in debt for a house worth far less than the price demanded, are understandingly bitter." The businessmen, said Stefaniak, "are the ones who walk away with all the money, leaving us with all the problems."

"They harass us; we harass them," said Mrs. Gale Cincotta, of the Westside coalition, getting down to the tactical brass tacks of the most successful of the groups. They hit hardest at the real estate salesmen whom they find panic-peddling, or thinking about it. There may be a firm phone call from one of these groups. Then fifty, sixty or 200 people may converge on the real estate office. Then, perhaps, on the salesman's home, out in the suburbs. Then, occasionally, a phone call at 2 A.M. Where there are workable laws and regulations against panic-peddling (there are few) the groups file complaints or

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seek legal action. Where there are not, they lobby for them, and often get them.

These are unlikely militants. Mrs. Cincotta, for example, is a 42-year-old PTA activist and a leader of the Organization for a Better Austin in Chicago. Her husband operates a gas station. She has two kids, and the whole family lives with her parents in a 2-story brick house.

"I remember the place where I grew up," just a few blocks away from St. Sylvester's. "You see things happening there. My youngest son's school enrollment went from 475 to a few thousand in just three years. You see the realtor come and grab you and say 'the niggers are coming.' Some people are just afraid and don't get involved. They think they went to the polls, voted for an alderman, and that that's enough. . . . But the cities have reached a point where we'd better do something and do something fast."

There is a thin line between fighting "blockbusting" and keeping blacks out entirely, and the groups are very conscious of that. But, said Mrs. Bernice Davis, a black woman in the Westside coalition, the neighborhood groups are not worrying about racial hostility right now. They don't require anyone to confess prejudice one way or the other. "I cannot say all the whites are all for living with blacks," she said, suggesting that the whole question has to be submerged—because "there's a new enemy.

"If the whites stay long enough to see we're human, said Mrs. Davis, "they can stop running." □

ILLEGAL ALIENS

SCAPEGOATS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

CLAY STEINMAN
Mr. Steinman is a student in the School of Journalism at Columbia University, who recently served a brief apprenticeship at The Nation. *This is his first published work.*

As the unemployment toll continues to rise, with no ceiling in sight, it becomes more and more apparent that Mr. Nixon's economic policy is not working as its proponents had hoped. Scapegoats have been sought to distract the minds of American workers from the spreading suspicion that the nation's economic problems may not be as readily solved as the President had said.

Ira Gollobin, legal counsel of the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, recently characterized the situation astutely: "If you can't solve the problem the real ways, you have to try the phony ones." The latest phony solution has trotted out a familiar scapegoat—the foreigners are the villains—in this case the illegal aliens, a group of people all too easily stepped upon and dismissed from public concern.

Most of the major newspapers and news magazines have been giving occasional space to complaints against the illegal aliens. It has been said that they have taken jobs away from American citizens, that they have burdened the public treasury by languishing on the welfare rolls while others work hard and pay taxes to support them. Those pressing the issue have been trying to describe in simple terms a situation that is not so easily defined. Because illegal aliens tend to shy away from authority, living an almost underground existence, there can be no accurate data about them. Claims as to their effect on the country are most difficult to document.

Acting on this issue in concert with a segment of the press—notably the New York *Daily News, The Washington Post* and *The Christian Science Monitor*—has been Rep. Peter Rodino (D., N.J.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on immigration. The subcommittee concluded hearings on March 24; it will review them now that Congress has reconvened, and will then consider an Administration-backed bill—HR 2328—dealing with immigration. Two sections of the bill, 26 and 28, would considerably affect the plight of the illegal alien in the country and could possibly erode the civil liberties of everyone. Under Section 26, employers who knowingly hire an illegal alien—or fail to inquire into an employee's immigration status—would be subject to a fine of up to $1,000 and/or one year of imprisonment for each violation. Section 28 would similarly penalize any alien who illegally takes a job in the country. Either or both provisions could lead to a requirement that every person desiring work carry identification proving legal residence and the right to work.

The controversy is complex. Those involved include Mexicans who cross the border illegally, seamen who jump ship, immigrants who enter the country legally as visitors or students and stay beyond the limit of their visas. All have certain things in common with one another and with American immigrants throughout history; looking for a better life in this country, many have left their families behind, hoping to bring them later. They send back money when they can and they struggle to survive and make new lives for themselves in what they have been told will be a relatively promised land.

The problem with this problem is that no one knows exactly how big it is. As with most issues, partisans produce figures that support their views. Almost every published report on the subject contains new figures which dispute those previously announced. On May 5, 1971, the commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Raymond F. Farrell, told the Rodino subcommittee that "last year [presumably fiscal year 1970] we located more than 343,000 aliens who had entered the United States illegally, and 97 per cent of these would be Mexican nationals within the Southwest region."

Paul Montgomery gave in the October 17th *New York Times* what seems to be a reliable figure for fiscal 1971: 420,176 apprehended illegal aliens. Montgomery

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also said, with no documentation, that in addition "hundreds of thousands and more find it easy to get away." According to his figures, some 320,000, or roughly 80 per cent, of those caught were Mexicans. Neither he nor anyone else whom I have encountered has tried to explain the drop in percentage of Mexicans from Farrell's figure of 97 per cent. Montgomery did not directly identify the source of his statistics, but it seems that he got them from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

However, the number of illegal aliens caught in any one or two years tells little about the dimensions of the problem. How many were not caught? How many illegal aliens are there in the country? The AFL-CIO American Federation of Government Employees' National Council of Immigration and Naturalization Service Employees told the *Los Angeles Times* in October that at that time between 1.5 and 2 million aliens were illegally in the country. The union also claimed that these aliens cost Americans $5 billion a year in wages. Moreover, the union said, illegal aliens annually send $500,000 back home, "hurting the nation's balance of payments." Those are, of course, estimates.

The introduction to a two-part series on the issue in *The Christian Science Monitor,* published in November, described the situation as follows: "Some 2.5 million aliens are residing illegally in the United States. Many hold jobs of the sort sorely needed by low-income citizens. They pay little or no taxes on their income and ship millions of dollars 'back home' each year." In one of the articles in the series, the *Monitor*'s Jo Ann Levine converted the 420,176 quoted by *The New York Times* into an "estimated 500,000." The usually careful *Monitor* was, in the case of these two stories, loose with minor facts. For example, 120,000 immigrants are admitted legally each year from Latin America, not 100,000 as Levine reported. The "2.5 million" figure was attributed to no one. Other charges were ascribed to the union of immigration employees with no critical analysis or statements to counteract the undocumented union propaganda. Even the otherwise careful Montgomery at times uncritically echoed the union's reckless charges. He went so far as to say, offering no evidence, that the "influx of aliens has had clearly deleterious effects on the economy and balance of payments, the labor market, immigration policy and social services such as welfare."

And the *Times* in February printed, with no competing analysis, the charges of the otherwise liberal New York City Councilman Andrew Stein (D., Man.) that "illegal aliens on welfare in New York City may be costing up to $100 million a year in relief grants."

The most sensational and distorted press coverage of the issue, however, came from the New York *Daily News* and *The Washington Post*. The *News* has frequently run and often featured articles quoting the scare stories of disgruntled union officials or their Congressional allies. The stories offer dramatic revelations of illegal aliens on welfare, illegal aliens taking jobs from able-bodied Americans, illegal aliens crowded together in the city. In an editorial of March 2, "Better Late than Never," the *News* said:

> Since last September 30, Rep. Peter Rodino (D., N.J.) has been promising to bring his House Judiciary subcommittee on immigration to New York City for hearings on the subject of aliens slithering illegally into the United States and taking jobs at sub-standard pay. . . .
>
> Better late than never; and we trust the subcommittee will dig determinedly. This is a most serious business, and some remedy is needed more urgently by the day.

The Washington Post is supposed to know better. While their reporter, Stephens Isaacs, used no racial slurs and even commiserated at times with the plight of the illegal alien, his article, "Aliens Flood N.Y. Rolls Posing as Puerto Ricans," on page 1 of the October 19th issue, can easily be read as promoting fear, racism and ethnocentricity. It began:

> Up to one million New Yorkers may not be New Yorkers at all.
>
> They may be aliens from such places as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Ecuador and Venezuela who have stolen into the United States, masquerading as Puerto Ricans, and now pass as American citizens.

Isaacs said, with no documentation: "Their numbers could help to explain the housing shortage in New York. The high unemployment rate among Puerto Ricans is an obvious result, as is the constant swelling of the city's caseload (1,206,973 as of the latest count)."

The invasion sounds pretty scary, even worth investigation, until you look at the charges one by one, examine the situation without hysteria, and then study the legislation that has been proposed to alleviate what is alleged to be a grave situation.

First, the nature of the problem in the Southwest. From 1951 until the mid-1960s, Mexicans who wanted to work as stoop laborers in that part of the country were admitted legally under the "bracero" program, which Congress eventually halted in response to what appear to be valid charges that the Mexicans were greatly exploited. Critics of the bracero policy also claimed that Mexicans were often used as strikebreakers to frustrate the union organizers of American migrant workers.

When the program ended, the growers found themselves without a legal source of cheap labor, though they continued to hire aliens. Reporters on the subject have quoted growers as believing Mexicans to be more efficient and more willing to accept poor working conditions than are the Mexican-Americans who support families in inflation-ridden America. The Mexicans are also less likely to demand better wages, hours or conditions, since their employers can call the border patrol and have them thrown out of the country at any time.

Some Congressmen, notably Robert Price (R., Tex.), have advocated a return to the bracero program. Yet indications are that the re-creation of that exploitive situation will not provide jobs for American nationals or stop illegal immigration in that area. The problem has its roots both in the living conditions in Mexico and the economic base of the involved portion of the agricultural industry. Mexicans smuggle themselves across the border and pay up to $300 to find work because they cannot support themselves at home. Mexican-Americans won't take the jobs because, by their standards and needs, the pay is much too low. Halting the Mexican immigration by laws such as the one the Rodino committee will consider would not provide employment for Americans

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who quite properly refuse to work in menial, backbreaking jobs for wages that doom them to poverty.

Food prices, high as they are, would soar much higher if the agricultural workers received decent wages. A doubling of the wage rate in oranges, for example, might put some marginal growers out of business. They can't pay fair wages and maintain their profits without pricing themselves out of the diet of the already rebellious American consumer. That is not an argument for inadequate wages; it just shows how dependent part of the American economic system is on exploited labor. Far from being a drag on the economy, the Mexicans who enter the country illegally—and others like them—help support our relatively high standard of living.

Despite this effect, California instituted in February a miniature version of the pending federal legislation on illegal aliens. In that state it is now illegal to hire knowingly an illegal alien, when such employment has "an adverse effect on lawful resident workers." The law, passed despite objections from the growers, provides fines of $200 to $500 for each offense. (Recently the law was declared unconstitutional by a lower court but the issue has not been finally resolved.)

The November 20th *New York Times* quoted unidentified Chicano organizations as denouncing the California law as "legalized racism" that will add "new hardships and horrors" to what they described as existing discrimination against that state's Mexican-Americans. Others have objected to the law on the ground that employers will be reluctant to hire any Mexican-Americans for fear they might be illegal aliens. The law is so new that no data are available on its effect upon the economy or the immigration situation in California. But, according to the *Times,* the growers who protested its enactment explained that American workers will not accept the jobs they offer as stoop laborers. It is extremely doubtful that the law will have much effect, except perhaps to make life rougher for the Chicanos.

If 80 per cent of the aliens caught last year were Mexicans, how large is the problem in the rest of the nation. As with the Mexicans, there is no telling how many illegal aliens there are elsewhere in the country. Undeniably there are some, and almost all of them have entered the United States in one of three ways:

First, since the imposition of immigration quotas on this hemisphere in 1966, a number of Latin Americans have used either real or forged visitor or student visas to enter the country. Once here, they have simply remained. Many keep their names on waiting lists in their home countries for regular immigration status. If that is received, they leave the United States and return legally. Some of them get married and/or have children here, hoping thus to speed the day when they will receive permission to live in this country permanently.

In his October 17th *New York Times* article, Montgomery analyzed immigration statistics to determine how many fall into this category. As he described it: "In 1965 [the last year when there was no immigration quota for Latin America] in the Western Hemisphere excluding Mexico and Canada, the State Department issued 205,358 non-immigrant visas. The comparable figure for 1970 was 488,914. It is probable that illegal aliens account for most if not all of that increase."

A second group of Latin Americans arrives via Puerto

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Rico. They get real or forged visitors' visas to Puerto Rico, procure a forged Puerto Rican birth certificate, and then hop the first plane out for the States. Since Americans are for the most part unable to tell one Latin American from another, these illegal aliens easily pass for Puerto Ricans and stay in the country.

The final group crosses the Canadian border or jumps ship in an American harbor. Without citing a specific source, Montgomery said that "estimates run as high as 100,000 at any one time" of Canadians working illegally in America. He also claimed that "the border crossers also include aliens being smuggled into the United States, and seamen who have jumped ship in Canada." The New York *Daily News* of October 11 quoted unidentified immigration officials as saying that between 2,000 and 3,000 Greeks enter the United States illegally each year by jumping ship.

Again, no one really knows how many illegal aliens there are in each category. What is known is that much has been written about the damage done the country by the presence of these illegal aliens. Yet a little study shows that the charges against them are ludicrous and ignore the way of life of most illegal aliens. Here, with comment, are the most common allegations:

They hold jobs of the sort sorely needed by low-income citizens. This is the argument that distracts attention from rising unemployment. The Mexican illegal aliens take underpaid jobs in the Southwest that native Americans reportedly won't take. As for the other illegal aliens, anyone who reads the want ads or looks into restaurant windows knows that, even though there is high unemployment in the nation, menial jobs at low wages are abundant. Openings exist for maids and waitresses and dishwashers and floor sweepers. Most unemployed people will not take these jobs, preferring to stay on unemployment until the insurance runs out or until they can find jobs either at their level of competence or that pay reasonably well. Illegal aliens, fearful of being turned in and desperate for money, will take menial work at substandard wages. Perforce, they will accept a work week that Americans turn down.

They pay little or no taxes on their income. Again, that is improbable. Most illegal aliens are in jobs where their taxes are withheld by their employers.

They ship millions of dollars "back home" each year. While one may assume that illegal aliens do send money home, as immigrants have always done, it is unlikely that enough of them could afford to send home sums that would add up to "millions."

They are swelling the welfare rolls. Susannah Gross spends much of her time as a district assistant in Rep. William F. Ryan's New York City office. (Ryan, a member of the Rodino committee, has opposed the anti-alien legislation.) She said: "These people have a fear of anything official. They are afraid they'll be turned in." Even though illegal aliens are entitled by law to receive welfare, she added, they rarely do so. Most of them hope eventually to become permanent residents, and according to the immigration laws they automatically become ineligible for that status if they have ever received money from the government. Said Gollobin, "They shun authority like the plague."

Gross opposed the suggested legislation because, she said, the "penalties currently available are sufficient," and the cost of enforcing such legislation would be "questionable" in terms of time and money. She also explained that, as reports from California already indicate, if employers knew they could be penalized for hiring illegal aliens, "there is some basis to believe that some employers would discriminate against foreign-looking or foreign-sounding employees." The opening of Social Security files to determine whether or not a person is an illegal alien would be "frightening," she said.

In addition to these objections, Gollobin said he was distressed by the prospect that every American might be forced to carry a card proving legal eligibility for employment. "The card is part of the effort for national surveillance. Even if they use Social Security cards, that would mean everyone would have to register with the government, everyone would have to have a number."

The issue of illegal aliens is important because it is intimately associated with the major crises now facing the country. With few exceptions, illegal aliens come to America because life for them is so hostile in their native lands—a condition arising in no small part from the imperialist relationship of the United States with much of the world. As long as there are "haves" in the world, the "have nots" will fight for their just share of the wealth. Immigration is only one reflection of that impulse.

Whatever the dimensions of the problem, it is not so serious nationally that it merits the time and attention it has been getting. Sections 26 and 28 of HR 2328 should be defeated, but, more important, they should not have been put there in the first place. Efforts to cloud ill-defined problems with misleading rhetoric only draw energy away from the need to overhaul the basis of the country's economic policies at home and abroad. □

LETTERS

the hope in McGovern

Santa Barbara, Calif.

DEAR SIRS: In 1968 we rallied in the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns and for a few months there was hope that the nightmarish war in Indochina and the alienation and disintegration at home would end and the work of reconciliation and reconstruction would begin.

Four hard, bitter and tragic years have gone by and once again it is an election year. Once again there is hope, but there is also apathy and weariness and frustration. We must not miss this chance. We must bring back the sense of reason and the feeling of good will to the American people . . .

George McGovern will do it. His is the only candidacy that offers us a chance to put not a Madison Avenue madeup politician but a sincere and honest man in the White House. The New Hampshire and Wisconsin primaries have finally laid to rest the fable that no more than 6 per cent of voters support McGovern, and brought out in the open the depth and breadth of his grass-roots following.

Let us unite behind George McGovern. Let us put an end to the dark decade of 1963-72 and let us begin a new era of light and love and hope.

Nick Cherniavsky

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Conservation and Social Radicalism

FUTURE ENVIRONMENTS OF NORTH AMERICA. *Edited by F. Fraser Darling and John P. Milton. Doubleday/Natural History Press. 767 pp. $12.95. Paper $5.95.*

MICHAEL KENNEDY
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Lionel Trilling once remarked that American literary intellectuals often talk and write as if they were the only people in the country who ever thought about anything. He went on to point out that there were thousands of other people in the United States whose work caused them to be professionally concerned with ideas, and to suggest that urban intellectuals ought to find out more about what these people are doing.

One of the most interesting aspects of the highly publicized Earth Day celebrations of the last few years was the lack of enthusiasm for the event shown by many urban radicals and reformers. This was due in part, of course, to revulsion against Earth Day's intensely official character. The first sponsors of Earth Day were several conservation societies, whose members wanted to use some of the new political techniques developed in the 1960s to dramatize the deterioration of the American environment. The mass media and a large number of politicians, however, apparently saw a protest about ecology as greatly preferable to civil rights demonstrations or anti-Vietnamese War marches, and gave Earth Day their approval and helped it get widespread publicity. Hundreds of bankers, clergymen, professors and other assorted notables and dignitaries flocked to endorse the idea. By April 23, Earth Day had become middle-class America's answer to the young hippies and radicals, its version of what a really nice demonstration was like: a proper cause, respectable demonstrators, quiet, and above all, *clean*.

The hostility that many radicals and urban reformers felt for Earth Day sprang, though, from deeper sources than just distaste for the pumped-up false enthusiasm of the mass media. One of the most important facts, after all, about the American conservation movement, is that the vast majority of conservationists, until very recently, have been solid, prosperous, middle- and upper-class Protestants, from families long established in the United States. Or in other words, they were Wasps.

Our standard political rhetoric of democracy, Americanism and national unity, undoubtedly keeps our heterogeneous country from flying apart into a hundred different pieces. It also hides the degree to which politicians and their policies represent particular class, ethnic and sectional interests, rather than the public interest. Our public rhetoric also blurs the fact that most reform movements are a form of symbolic politics that obliquely expresses the values and interests of different groups in our society. Professional historians in England and America have only recently begun to examine the history of philanthropic institutions and social reform movements. Until about fifteen years ago the study of organizations like the Red Cross and the YMCA was called "social history," and usually left to pious ladies chroniclers, or to journalists who were making a quick $1,500 by writing anniversary volumes. Only in the last few years has a more sophisticated generation of American historians begun to see these social movements as part of that vast struggle of groups and individuals for power and place and status which makes up the web of our national life.

Most of the first leaders of the conservation movement were wealthy, upper-class Easterners, men like Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, who were disturbed by the speed with which white settlement was destroying the wild lands of the West. The conservation idea appealed to the members of an anxious middle class, increasingly worried by the changes that millions of immigrants and rapid industrial growth were bringing to the stable rural America in which they lived. The conservation movement offered these people a way of asserting the primacy of the values of the old America, their America, the America of "field and forest and stream," over the new industrial America, without absolutely rejecting industrialism and its benefits.

By the end of the 1890s conservation had become a popular, middle-class cause. When Theodore Roosevelt became President in 1901, and brought conservation into national politics, his calls for action met with a quick response from hundreds of earnest, high-minded men and women.

The exact nature of that response, however, is open to question. For many years historians were misled by the rhetoric of the Progressive reformers into thinking that Progressivism was in some respects a radical movement. Only recently have radical scholars like Gabriel Kolko begun to show that in many ways Progressivism was a profoundly conservative, even reactionary movement; that underlying the Progressives' anxious concern about the consequences of unlimited immigration, the urban poor, wildlife preservation, etc., was a deep fear of the new America that was coming into existence in the early 20th century. It was not an accident that many Progressives disliked both the new, giant corporations, and the recent immigrants and the unions they were trying to form. Probably much of the Progressives' program can best be understood as a kind of protest politics, an expression of a vague but profound desire to halt or slow down change, in order to retain the class system and moral values of a more rural past.

Conservation fit very well into this general Progressive pattern of distrust of the industrial city and all that it implied. Conservation became one of the favorite causes of energetic Progressive reformers. During Theodore Roosevelt's and Taft's administrations they succeeded in getting large tracts of land set aside as national parks, forest preserves and wildlife sanctuaries.

The appeal of the conservation movement has never been limited to members of any one political party. The leaders of the large conservation societies have been successful, through the 20th century, in advancing and pleading their causes before Republican and Democratic administrations alike. But although the number of Americans interested in conservation has risen steadily, the class background of American conservationists has changed very little during the 20th century. The weight and power of the conservation movement has always been concentrated in the Northeastern seaboard states; most conservationists have been middle, upper-middle or upper-class Americans of Old American stock. A very high percentage of the officers and trustees of the various conservation societies still come from upper-class families.

It also would probably be fair to say that the immediate beneficiaries of most of the great conservation triumphs

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have been the conservationists themselves. The preservation of the marvelous natural landscapes of Big Sur, or of the lower Hudson Valley, means, first of all, the preservation of the homes and property of the middle- and upper-class people who already live there. When all further construction is forbidden in such areas, it means that in the future only the wealthy will ever be able to live there. The rest of the population will drive down on weekends, stand on a viewing platform and look around with binoculars, and go away again.

No one who knew anything about the history of the conservation movement could have been too surprised when large numbers of urban radicals and reformers showed little interest in Earth Day. Many young radicals who were interviewed over television spoke very scornfully about the conservation movement. As one young white radical said, "The pavements, man, that's where the action is. All this talk about trees and water pollution—that's just shit put out by the system, to keep people from seeing what their real problems are." Many older reformers, although their rhetoric was usually less violent, joined with the young radicals in disparaging or denying the importance of conservation programs.

This insistence on seeing conservation and urban renewal, conservation and the peace movement, as two sides of an either/or situation, is tragic. For all these people who want to change the United States are faced with the same problem, or perhaps one should say, with the same fact. The growth of the Republic during the past thirty years has been chaotic. The vast annual expenditures of the federal government for military purposes, from 1940 to the present, and the new technologies that this spending has spurred into existence, have brought this country to an unprecedented level of prosperity. These huge spending programs, however, have drastically, and probably permanently, altered the character of the United States. They have hastened the decline of our cities, accelerated the decay of our traditional political institutions, and stimulated an almost catastrophic rate of population growth.

No one knows what will happen, but one can get some idea of what the immediate future probably will be like by reading *Future Environments of North America*. This large symposium volume, published by Doubleday for the American Museum of Natural History in 1966, and recently reprinted in paperback, contains the forty-odd papers presented at the Conservation Foundation's 1965 conference on the future of the wildlands of the United States and Canada. *Future Environments of North America* received almost no attention from reviewers when it was first published, apart from those writing for biological journals and conservation magazines; the book's formidable title, and its sponsorship by a science museum, apparently led most review editors to conclude that the book was too specialized for them to notice.

This lack of attention in the general magazines was unfortunate. While the publication of books on wild animals, ecology, national parks, etc., could now almost be called a minor American industry, few of these books examine the background of our present biological crisis with much care. Some of the papers in *Future Environments of North America*, however, and particularly some of the discussions that followed the papers, thrust to the heart of the problem—that is, to our fundamental American values, and the political and social institutions that create and sustain them.

Even a cursory reading of *Future Environments of North America* makes one fact very clear. The America of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the partly rural, partly industrial America of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, is over. The years when the United States was a country of endless space and infinite distances have finally ended. Most educated Americans vaguely assume that the existence of the national parks and forests has solved most conservation problems. Many Easterners apparently think that large parts of the American West are still wild and unsettled. Only a few thousand biologists and conservationists seem to understand that the human population of the United States already occupies or exploits more than 95 per cent of the land, and threatens to engulf the few protected areas that remain. The National Park Service, for example, is under pressure from politicians at all levels of government to develop the national parks by building more roads, opening more recreation areas and trailer camps, and of course, licensing more local entrepreneurs to sell goods and services to the public. There are now only three areas in the continental United States, apart from Northern and Central Alaska, that are more than 15 miles from some kind of road. The only wolves left in the United States, south of Alaska, are a pack of twenty-five on Isle Royale National Park in northern Michigan, that came across the lake ice from Canada one winter.

When Chateaubriand came over to the New World in the 1790s, he stepped ashore onto a continent that had changed very little since Columbus had landed 300 years earlier. Vast hardwood forests covered most of the eastern part of the lands that had just recently become the United States. A squirrel, so the folk saying went, could travel from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Lawrence River without ever touching the ground. Ten miles from Manhattan Island, Chateaubriand was able to walk through vast primeval forests that had never been logged or cut.

Many urban intellectuals became aware after 1945 that the country was changing very rapidly. The chaotic society that twenty-five years of military spending and unplanned growth have produced has been anxiously analyzed many times in the intellectual journals. But the striking parallels between the fears of urban reformers and intellectuals, and the problems that are faced by the conservation societies in the rushing, expanding United States of the 1970s, have largely been ignored by both groups.

One of the great insights of 19th-century culture, an insight that is already in danger of being lost, was the discovery of the value of difference and diversity. Like great art and literature, the wilderness, too, can liberate, and free men from standardized thought and emotion. The very irregularity and roughness of natural objects makes nature, like art, a source of alternative values in an increasingly smoothed-off world. A number of modern artists have written about

SONG OF THE RUNAWAY GIRL

I give you the rust from my hands
I give you the salt from my lover's neck
I give you the bees from my nipples
their twelve thousand eyes I give you
their diligence & wrath

I give you my tongue to stop the blood
I give you my hair to dress your wounds
I give you my flight, my confusion
under your weight
I give you my love, my hate

Gary Gildner

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the way in which people in cities have their eyes and imaginations impoverished by the monotonously similar environment in which they live. They suggest that if human beings live long enough in such places, eventually they may not be able to like or understand anything else. One has only to think of the recent enthusiasm for Pop art, an art form that carries as its essential message a profound conviction of the similarity and meaninglessness of all objects. One might, perhaps, go even further, and speak of the profound contempt for people and things (for it is possible to despise the physical world as well as other persons), which is one of the characteristic vices of our time, and which is bred by a conviction of the sameness of everything. The preservation of natural objects of any kind, from frog ponds across the road to great wilderness parks in Alaska, thus becomes another means of resisting the brutal simplification of human life toward which our whole age is rapidly moving.

The proceedings of the conference suggest, however, that conservationists will find it very hard to bring about any meaningful kind of land reform in this country. Economists have now largely supplanted lawyers as the chief professional advisers to both government and industry in the United States. The economists at the conference liked most of the changes that have taken place here. They could not imagine the present expansion ever ending, or think its continuation anything but desirable. The only reforms they wanted were those that would make the existing situation more stable.

To the biologists and conservationists present, who knew that as a result of 300 years of unchecked exploitation of the continent, most of North America by the mid-1960s was little better than an outdoor slum, this kind of thinking seemed repulsive and false. In paper after paper, ecologists and conservationists described the America of the 1960s —polluted air, foul lakes, land that would only grow poisonous vegetables—and asked when there would be some kind of government control over population growth and land use.

What most strikes an outsider, reading the reports of the conference a few years later, is that politics was never discussed. This refusal or inability of the participants to see conservation problems in a political context was the great failure of the conference. Most of the immediate problems that conservationists are trying to solve result from the country's rapidly increasing population, and the economic expansion that spurs and accompanies it. Population growth is ultimately a political problem, which could be solved if American politicians were courageous enough. The federal government could finance birth control propaganda, and abolish the tax advantages now given to people with large families. Similarly, although everyone talks as if economic expansion were as inevitable as the rising of the moon, in fact much of this growth is a consequence of decisions made by politicians. When Congress decides to build superhighways, or to provide certain industries with tax advantages, it is bringing about further industrial expansion.

Although the biologists at the conference complained about private and corporate greed, in the end they joined with the economists in accepting present economic arrangements and the existing social order as inevitable and unchangeable. Only Lewis Mumford asked if the way most Americans lived now was the best life that it was possible for them to have. At the end of his speech all the other participants rose and cheered; the solutions, however, that the biologists finally put forward were timid and conventional. They called for more administrative remedies—more laws, more government bureaus, more game wardens and larger appropriations—and avoided the subject of politics.

The problems, however, that conservationists must solve if they are ever to realize their dream of restoring the old, green America, are basically political problems, and require political solutions. Conservationists must begin to see the problems facing the conservation societies as one aspect of the one great problem that many thinking people are beginning to realize they are confronted with today, that is, the American way of life as we live it now.

In the past the obvious respectability of the conservationists was one of their principal assets when they were arguing their causes before reluctant legislatures or skeptical philanthropists. The established conservation societies cannot sponsor direct-action tactics by their officers or members; if they did, the Internal Revenue Service would soon take their tax-exempt status away. But one wonders if the time has not come for individual conservationists, at least, to abandon their respectability, and to join with other groups of dissenters in protesting the present organization of American society. □

American Literature Today . . . Interview with M.L. Rosenthal

Editor's note: The interview that follows appeared originally in *La Quinzaine Littéraire* (Paris), and is reprinted here, in slightly abridged form, with the kind permission of that journal. The interviewer was M. Serge Fauchereau. Part II will appear in a later issue.

Mr. Rosenthal, at one time it was possible to discuss American literature in terms of distinct schools or movements —Black Mountain, etc. Isn't all that out of date now, or wide of the mark? Or do developments point to something quite new in that regard?

One of the great banal facts of culture is that no idea or movement ever dies outright. Resurrection is the most ordinary of cultural phenomena; death is the only miracle, never yet witnessed. Have you ever seen a death notice in the newspapers for any doctrine whatsoever, whether religious, political, philosophical or literary? Everything comes back again and again, and is called "new." In America now the "new" plague is *astrology*, of all things. The infection was caught in modern Europe, where I'm constantly amazed to see my sophisticated friends exchanging cosmic nonsense. One American victim is the poet Galway Kinnell, who tinctured his otherwise beautiful latest volume, *The Book of Nightmares*, with astrological symbolism that almost destroys it.

The recent American tendencies, such as the Beat movement, the Black Mountain poets, the movement to establish an autonomous black culture, and the new emphasis on political literature generally, were none of them genuinely original —although they put forward some writers of originality. The Beats—Ginsberg, Kerouac, and related figures like Burroughs—represent a revival of revolutionary romanticism and bohemianism of a sort very familiar in the last century and before the last war. As for the Black Mountain poetic theorists, their main positions were opened up by such 19th-century figures as Wordsworth in England and Mallarmé in France. Wordsworth and other Romantics realized the importance for poetry of vernacular speech. Mallarmé's analysis of what happened to French poetry after Hugo was an extraordinary glimpse into the elements of what we now call "open form." In our own century an earlier generation of great American poets (Pound, Eliot and Williams) moved into

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the techniques that younger poets like Olson and Duncan have worked with.

It would be foolish to predict that there will be no more movements, no more manifestos, no more banners. At this moment, however, there are "interesting younger figures" and "interesting older figures"—that's all. What we have witnessed, I think, is the completion of business left unfinished since 1939. After the fall of Spain and the signing of the Soviet-German pact, the American Left lost its precarious authority and momentum. A decade earlier it was vigorously alive despite the uncongenial intellectual milieu, and it was still allied—if only because of the charming notoriety of personalities like Isadora Duncan, Maxwell Bodenheim and Emma Goldman rather than by virtue of any clear intellectual formulation—with an open and "experimental" attitude toward morality and art. Doctrinaire solemnity and sheer philistinism destroyed that alliance from within. Then the war and the postwar McCarthy period led to a repellent and mysterious atmosphere of repression—mysterious because although we did not have fascism many people behaved with a fear appropriate to life under fascism. A hopeless timidity settled like scum over much of our intellectual and professional life. No one of any distinction advocated revolutionary perspectives; if you were *against* the Left, even, there was no one to argue with. The milieu of intelligent political discussion disappeared, replaced by the empty rhetoric of professional politicians. It was inevitable that, when the generation born toward the end of the war came of age, there would be an explosion of violent nausea.

Because of the vacuum of mature advanced revolutionary and libertarian thought, a highly neurotic atmosphere of nihilism led in turn to a facile advocacy of liberation through drugs, promiscuity, and the endless repetition of the slogans *Liberty!* and *Love!* Although young people and certain writers, especially the Beats, were foremost in this new ferment, we all felt its force at least to some degree. We all felt a certain empathy with the desire for a life absolutely without inhibition or calculation, despite the irrationality, the trivial vulgarity, and the actual disregard for the sacredness of private personality and of human intelligence displayed by the new movement.

But all that is no longer either new or especially exciting. The revolutionary tendency, a modulation toward the Europeanization of American thought, has broken into the open. It can now be seen in its own right, and the various elements sorted out. Drug experimentation has become a medical problem, not an artistic battle cry. The "counterculture"—which rejects traditional learning and preoccupation with aesthetic form—is now seen as barren except for one very important aspect: its practical concern with empirical questions of cultural adjustment. The black cultural movement has established that mere assimilationism is never the answer for minorities. However, it is beginning to surrender its extremism. In art, the horizons are widened; the brilliant possibilities for formal structure that is not as tied down to past assumptions in art are clear to almost everyone. One becomes bored with movements and "positions." The political situation in its most violent aspects (especially Vietnam) has shown writers that they all belong to the same school—the school of sensibility, of the comradeship of subjective awareness. In every country, the various literary movements are all *national* movements (except concrete poetry, a product of international technology rather than of artistic passion), and nationalism is the most tedious of commitments.

How does the question of commitment to racial problems, or to those raised by the war in Vietnam, present itself to writers? From our French point of view, these matters seem—in a somewhat oversimplified fashion—to be connected briefly with personalities: that of a writer like LeRoi Jones, for example, or of a brilliant journalist like Norman Mailer.

We start with the premise that literature is always "engaged," not so much through programmatic positions as through the state of sensibility and of the language at a given moment. William Carlos Williams has a poem about a dog that has been injured by an automobile and is howling in the street. The pain of the animal is something the poet can do nothing about, but it sets off a whole train of associations—instances of cruelty and pain, and thoughts of war and the atomic bomb. None of this is programmatic or tendentious; the poet's thoughts simply embody the kind of awareness that we all have nowadays.

Every literature is replete with "engagement" in this sense. The greater the writer, the more he reveals, through his very style, about the deep motifs of society. But of course, the word is ordinarily meant to suggest the deliberate consecration of the writer to political struggle through his art. This means an identification—or confusion, in many cases—of modes of thought and action that are almost mutually exclusive. France, of course, has such a rich experience with this problem that she hardly needs instruction from an American. We have no examples at present in our country of genuine, highly educated intellectuals who are also, at the same time, political journalists and activists in the thick of the struggle and widely respected as literary artists. That is partly a matter of the political milieu itself, where there is little room for the equivalent of a Malraux or a Sartre. Mailer and Jones resemble the earlier Malraux in their desire to be men of action, *physically* as well as ideologically—to become heroes of the people as well as discoverers of their own dreams and meanings. Jones established a power base in one of the great American cities (Newark, N.J.) as a black nationalist leader, although his influence seems to be diminishing lately. He has written poems that might be taken as inciting to riot, murder and rape, and certainly contemptuous hatred toward whites. But his most interesting poems and plays—and he remains a person of extraordinary interest—clarify the ambiguity of his being a man of his own kind: a black man with a "white heritage" who wishes to re-create himself and the Negro population of America in a rather primitivistic image. Mailer, though his thinking is far more open, seems far less idealistic in his desire to subordinate himself to a consuming cause. In his writings one sees him as a slightly self-ironic, would-be romantic Hemingway hero—great lover, great boxer, vanguardist in the struggle against the Vietnamese War,

ONE WAY

One way I have come
each step is the first,
but one day without you
and I am lost inside
the ruins of my stomach.
Outside there is a wind
tearing the limb
of a barren fig tree.
Black threads of rain
hang down over my cabin.

Pencils erase my name.
My throat is staying up
all night in the cellar.
My eyes are hiding under the bed.
Maybe if I swim long enough
my room will float out to sea,
maybe the captain
will put me in the galley
with a dead chicken.

Where could I be
that I must teach myself
the holding of the breath,
the shutter in the dark?
Where could I be
that I must live alone
searching the palm of my hand
for your delicate face?

J. P. White

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staunch male outpost against the invading swarm of women—but without Hemingway's fear of and contempt for intellectuals. As a thinker he is bright but tiresome; his thoughts lack magnetic power, probably because he has little philosophical wisdom or artistic depth.

The literary journal which has the greatest prestige in the United States now is *The New York Review of Books.* Here one finds a great deal of the most significantly "engaged" *criticism,* much of it political, sociological, and concerned with educational and psychological theory. It is remarkable, though, that very seldom are contemporary poets or novelists discussed in its pages, and the success of this publication has encouraged a neglect of the very interesting work of contemporary writers, "engaged" or not, in other publications as well. The political life is part of the life of art, but political determinism creates attitudes that exclude art "for reasons of space"—especially "in times like these."

I don't want to give the impression that the mass of our writers are against engagement. A number of them actually took the leadership, early on, in the anti-Vietnam movement. Names like Robert Lowell, Denise Levertov, Mitchell Goodman, and many others come to mind. Similarly, with the movements for black liberation and women's liberation, certain writers have made it their primary concern to become spokesmen for their positions. What they have done has usually been honorable, often praiseworthy and sometimes courageous. And yet their best writing has not for the most part had much to do with activism. A few poems by Lowell, Ramon Guthrie and others have been written without swerving, as it were, from their own centers of gravity, and have therefore been true poems as well as effective political acts. There is a great number of war novels, incidentally largely unknown, that taken together constitute a tremendous indictment of modern warfare, regardless of who is waging it, against whom, and for what purpose. But that fact, like the fact that there is a fair number of excellent writers of integrity with a capacity for decent human indignation, is hardly a new one.

Is there such a thing as an "American-Jewish literature"—the notion is dear to the French—often in connection with the promotion of best sellers such as Herzog *or* Portnoy's Complaint?

Obviously, there are many Jewish writers in the United States. For most of us, this means that our parents or grandparents were immigrants from Eastern Europe whose children were more or less assimilated into American life, basically through the influence of the

Remedios Guanzon.

Father dead.

Mother blind.

REMEDIOS GUANZON
AGE 5. Father dead. TB. Mother blind. Earns a few pennies begging. Brother is a scavenger. Remedios guides mother's hands to spots on clothes that require particular scrubbing. Family lives in one small room. Must crawl through small opening to enter. Walls from material found at city dump. No facilities. Help to Remedios means help to entire family.

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PRUNUS MUME
(for Joan and Peter)

You chose from the Japanese
a plum tree whose delicate
calligraphy scents parchments,
haiku, soup bowls, documents
of courtship. It gives you
instead of dusky night plums,
high noon apricots. How strange:
as when the goose saw in all
that barny straw not the
usual plain egg but one
of gold; or, walking between
white columns into a house
of federal grey, to be
greeted not with cool welcome
but with a scramble of dogs
and children.

Linda Pastan

system of free public education. Some of these Jewish immigrants were and remained Orthodox Jews strongly bound by family ties and traditional customs. Others were "liberated," to a lesser or greater degree, from the start. Some were working-class people, some were small shopkeepers, and others were scholars, writers, business people—the whole range of possibilities. Those of their descendants who are now writers are equally varied. It is really nonsense to speak of a special body of "American-Jewish literature" as though Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Karl Shapiro, Delmore Schwartz, Bernard Malamud, Paul Goodman, Allen Ginsberg, and perhaps a score of others of sufficient distinction had precisely the same backgrounds, subject matter and artistic preoccupations.*

I will grant that if you want to look into these writers for specifically Jewish references and experiences, you will find some. Bellow's early novel, *The Victim*, was a beautiful study in the psychology of double awareness involved in the process of assimilation. Its hero is a Jew—but then you will find the same kind of awareness in LeRoi Jones's best work, and, for that matter, in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, the novels of Gide, and Joyce's *Ulysses*. Philip Roth's "Jewish" humor is partly oversimplified Rabelais, partly in the manner of John Cleland (*Fanny Hill*), and partly universal-adolescent. (The Irish novelist John McEachern is like Roth in some essential ways.) I should note, by the way, that the pictures of American-Jewish life found in the fiction of Philip Roth are totally alien to my own experience. Malamud's pictures of the Jewish poor, on the other hand, I find more recognizable though sentimental and melodramatically falsified by his plots. However, the question is not so much one of verisimilitude as of a literary tendency. If you want to see what "Jewish" writing in a Jewish tradition is, look at Sholom Aleichem and I. B. Singer. Even Agnon has certain qualities in common with them. But the main sources of the American writers I have named range from Fielding and Sterne to Walt Whitman and the American tall tale. There is also a false Jewish stereotype, derived from vaudeville, that writers like Roth and Malamud and even Bellow at times exploit. I do not deny the presence of these writers. I do deny that they embody Jewish literary sensibility (an elusive and deceptive concept) in any definitive way. □

* Since the original publication of this interview, a reader has suggested that the question reflects, perhaps unconsciously, a feeling afloat in France that "American-Jewish writers are part of an American-Jewish commercial plot—possibly a plot to destroy indigenous American values, and eventually French ones." But I am sure that my friend Serge Fauchereau, at any rate, shares my disbelief in *The Protocols of Zion*.

The Last Bourgeois

LETTERS OF THOMAS MANN, 1889-1955. *Selected and Translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston. Alfred A. Knopf. 714 p. $17.50.*

MICHAEL HARRINGTON
Mr. Harrington's books include The Other America *and* Toward a Democratic Left *(Macmillan).*

This selection of letters by Thomas Mann is an invaluable aid for the understanding of one of the greatest men of letters of the century (personally, I would place him above both Proust and Conrad—the latter was one of his special favorites—and on the same plane as Joyce). It was Mann's destiny, and a prime source of his genius, to be forced constantly to change. Lukacs once said of him that he was a kind of seismograph of the century. The upheavals he recorded are found in his magnificent novels: in *Buddenbrooks*, with its conservative melancholy over the decline of the "Burgher"; in the ambiguities of *The Magic Mountain*, a book in which the hero simply disappears at the very end; in the tragic sense of the demoniac aspects of German culture in *Doctor Faustus*. In the letters, these various transformations are stated more straightforwardly, with a consequent loss of the symbolic richness that characterizes the fiction and a certain gain in abstract clarity.

The young Mann had a deep reverence for tradition; he was saddened by the decline of the Buddenbrooks family. In his patriotic, almost *volkisch*, essays of World War I, the *Betrachtungen*, he railed against the Parisian and rationalist views of his brother Heinrich—who, as the image of a *Civilizationsliterat*, was a model for Settembrini in *The Magic Mountain*. As late as 1919, he defends the *Betrachtungen* (which, as far as I know, have never been translated and certainly should be) and writes to Gustav Blume, "One must take a contemplative, even a resignedly cheerful view, read Spengler, and understand that the victory of England and America seals and completes the civilizing, rationalizing, pragmatizing of the West which is the fate of every aging culture." And in 1920, in a letter to Hermann Keyserling, he talks of the need to infuse German conservatism with intelligence.

But history would not leave Mann alone. He regarded the Russian Revolution in 1921 as based on the strategy of negating everything "in order to build anew out of nothing—this Bolshevist principle is sterile madness in the outer world but profoundest truth in the world of the inner self." Yet by the end of the next year he wrote to Ida Boy-Ed, "In the name of German humanitarianism I took arms against the revolution when it was starting. Today, out of the same impulse, I take arms against the reactionary wave which is sweeping over Europe just as one did after the Napoleonic wars . . . and which seems to me not a whit more agreeable where it takes a fascistic-expressionistic form." The ambiguity of that position, of a conservative who must fight a conservatism gone crazy, is, I think, very relevant to *The Magic Mountain*. Settembrini is too flowery and rhetorical, yet he is preferable to the Jesuit Communist fanatic Naphta (some say that Lukacs was one of the models for him) and to that ruined existentialist, Peeperkorn.

In a letter to Josef Poten in 1925, Mann replies to the charge that Hans Castorp never really makes a choice. "Nor is it accurate to say that Hans Castorp learns nothing at all, arrives at no resolution and no decision in his sorry place. In his dream in the snow he sees this: Man is, to be sure, too superior for life; let him therefore be good and attached to death in his heart. But man is also and especially too superior for death; let him therefore be free and kind

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in his thoughts. This insight into the human incompatibility of aristocratic alliance with death (history, romanticism) and of democratic amity toward life is not something that Hans bears 'triumphantly home on the point of his hunting spear,' as Wandrey . . . writes. On the contrary, Hans promptly forgets it again; in general, he is not personally able to cope with his higher thoughts."

But then neither was Mann personally able to cope with his higher thoughts. By the early 1930s, the one-time conservative had been driven to becoming a social-democratic sympathizer. In the early years of his exile, he was something of an ornament of the cultural Popular Front, but then, in the shock and disillusionment over Stalin's pact with Hitler and the acquiescence in it of some of his American followers, he turned bitterly on the Communists. At times, he tried to analyze his political transformations in terms of a conservative principle: "I am a man of balance. I instinctively lean to the left when the boat threatens to capsize on the right, and vice versa. . . ." But in reality, the tumultuous years in which he lived often seemed to overwhelm him, and his choices were made, not so judiciously as that quotation might suggest but in anguish.

Of all Mann's novels, the most agonized is, of course *Doctor Faustus*. It was written during World War II under the emotional impact of that event. In it, the composer Adrian Leverkuhn tries, through his music, to "take back" Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The crack which separates dream and reality has now become an abyss; the human spirit can imagine the harmonies of the *Ode to Joy*, but in Germany madness is actually in power. In the letters dealing with that extraordinary book one is struck by an odd fact: that Mann did manage to keep his personal equanimity during those trying years. As he wrote of *Doctor Faustus* to his good friend, Agnes Meyer, "The thing is difficult, weird, uncanny, sad as life—in fact even more so, since idea and art always exceed and exaggerate life."

And toward the very end, when he was working on his study of that happy existentialist, Felix Krull (Peeperkorn as Sunday's child), he wrote, "Thus I bring the hero, who is an amorist, into contact with the idea of Being itself, which perhaps is only an episode between Nothingness and Nothingness—as life on earth is only an incident with a beginning and end, since the inhabitability of a planet is limited." And yet, at the close of that somewhat gloomy reflection, he asks himself, "And Being itself, then, perhaps an evocation by love out of the void?" It was Mann's fate to have been born a burgher at the end of the bourgeois epoch, as he himself so well understood. His novels are a magnificent record, among other things, of how he attempted to cope with that challenge. And these letters illuminate the books, which means they are most worthwhile. □

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Something New in 'Town and Gown'

EARLY SPRING. *By Robert Hazel. W. W. Norton & Co. 222 pp. $5.95.*

LOUIS D. RUBIN, Jr.
Mr. Rubin teaches English at the University of North Carolina.

Robert Hazel's new novel, his first in some years, marks the re-emergence of a remarkable talent on the literary scene. *The Lost Year* and *A Field Full of People* attracted attention when they appeared back in the 1950s because of their freshness and the way in which the author was willing to include in his characterizations human elements that too many young novelists left out. They were unashamedly honest. The protagonists did not pose, did not assume attitudes. What Hazel sought to do was to show, without self-pity or self-flagellation, something of what it meant to be young in a world that demanded conformity along certain lines in order to "succeed."

Early Spring operates in more or less the same terrain, but with a significant difference. The protagonist has discovered himself, as it were. He knows what it is that he wants to do, and he has confidence in his standards and his values. When the world in which he finds himself—he is a writer and a teacher at a university in a Kentucky community—fails to allow him to live and love honestly and cleanly, he sticks to his guns, and will not compromise his integrity.

This is a "university novel," but not one of those stories in which scheming English professors double-cross sensitive poets, and cowardly administrators do dastardly things to truth-seeking undergraduates. Hazel's university exists in a society, must and does interact with the society, and affects and is affected by what goes on in the community. Politics, black power, Vietnam are involved; so are basketball and local social life. The customary disdain—customary in the "university novel"—of the intellectual for the jocks will not be found here. Hazel's people live in the compromised "real world," and his protagonist, Richard Lawrence, faces the task of squaring its recalcitrance with what he believes and what he wishes to be.

The central development in Hazel's novel is the disintegration of a love affair between Lawrence and a local girl, whose father is a power in town society and politics. Through it Hazel gets to the heart of the underlying theme of his novel: "town and gown," the place of the teacher-writer in a middle-class American community, the conscience of the intellectual as it must function in a society of power and privilege. The point is that in Lawrence's refusal to "grow up," to accept the moral

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compromise that "real life" would force upon him, what is being dramatized is the reckoning between the ideal and the "real"—for what Lawrence believes in and acts by is what Heidi's father and certain other people profess to believe in, yet negate by their actions and assumptions.

Early Spring builds toward a furious climax, and what it has to say and show is dramatized. It is an intelligent book, one that confronts social, political, aesthetic and psychological questions. For the most part these are made organic to the narrative; they are confronted, that is, in and through fiction.

Hazel's third novel, then, is a good one, written by a writer who says what he thinks. It will satisfy nobody's stereotypes of the situation it depicts, because it is written by a man who is accustomed to going his own way and asking his own questions. What it has to offer is integrity, seldom a very marketable quality and never a very popular one. But like his protagonist in *Early Spring*, Robert Hazel can't help that. □

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THEATRE / Harold Clurman

What struck me most forcefully in seeing the four one-act plays, collectively entitled *Black Visions* (Public Theatre) is the growing importance of the black theatre. It is more vitally a new theatre than the pseudo-ritualistic, nonverbal, *avant-garde* shows which boast of their novelty and daring.

The so-called "new" theatre is not exclusively, but at least determinedly, a theatre of presumably fresh *techniques*. There is certainly an element of social rebelliousness in the efforts of its proponents—they purport to explode "naturalism" as an attribute of the Establishment—but many of their noisy "experiments" are inchoate in thought and largely imitative. They have energy but, for the most part, betray a juvenile obstreperousness and pretentiousness that often lead nowhere in particular. Their major achievement is that they are headed away from the values of the Madison Avenue center or the routine entertainment market. That is a good thing, but it is not enough.

The black theatre, formally more conservative, has roots in living experience, and it is from such roots that significant expression emerges. New techniques are valuable only insofar as they embody new consciousness born from a community way of life.

The black theatre is still primal, it is just beginning. Though it has already brought forth a number of powerful shoots, it has not as yet produced first-rate works. We must regard that as normal. The masterpieces of the Greek and the Elizabethan theatres emerge as the culmination of long years of development. Every new society or special group within a larger social entity is initially characterized in its theatrical manifestations by crudity. The greatest asset of the black theatre at present is that it represents the hope, desire, need and, above all, the reality and the will of an ever spreading group of citizens to give voice and body to the life it lives.

Though its roots are deep, the range of black drama is still narrow. One would like to see plays not only of the ghetto but of every environment and economic sphere in which the black man and woman live: doctors, artists, public servants, teachers, et al. Their lives are not as typical as are those of the very poor, but they have their trials no less than the others. Such drama too will in time appear; and we shall all be the richer for it.

The short plays which comprise *Black Visions* are *Sister Son/ji* by Sonia Sanchez, *Players Inn* and *Cop and Blow* by Neil Harris, and *Gettin' It Together* by Richard Wesley. *Sister Son/ji* is directed by Novella Nelson, the others by Kris Keiser. All are convincingly acted by players who know whereof they speak.

Sister Son/ji is a monologue. A black mother from Mississippi remembers going north to college in New York, later suffering the tragedy of her young son's death in battle (it was not clear to me whether in foreign or domestic strife), and returning bereft and broken to the old Mississippi solitude. Gloria Foster brings clarity, dignity, power, as well as a handsome presence to the piece.

The two Neil Harris plays are comedies of Harlem corruption. There is no preachment or pointed commentary in either of them, only depiction. In the second of the two, *Cop and Blow*, two white plainclothes policemen blackmail witnesses to a murder of which they are blameless, only to be followed by an even more cynical action committed by a black detective. As H. L. Mencken remarked long ago, "If you live in hell, you've got to sweat."

The piece I liked best, Richard Wesley's *Gettin' It Together* (Wesley is the author of *The Black Terror*, produced earlier this season at the Public Theatre) presents a simple situation. Coretta has had a child by Nate; he supports her and their offspring but won't live with or marry her. Coretta wants a home, a secure relationship with the man she loves; Nate fears being tied down. The couple quarrel, are occasionally reconciled (their attachment is utterly genuine) but can't extricate themselves from the tangle of desire, affection and insecurity in which they may forever go on struggling, suffering and enduring.

Written with quiet honesty, the play manages to be effective by virtue of its very spareness. It is nicely acted with a minimum of histrionic stress, especially by Beverly Todd as Coretta.

I have little to say about *Voices* by Richard Lortz (Ethel Barrymore Theatre), which is a sort of dramatic epigram, part thriller and part "play of the supernatural." But it does arouse some thoughts about Julie Harris who, with Richard Kiley, stars in the play.

Julie Harris is one of our best actresses. In *Voices* her role calls on only a limited employment of her capacities: she does everything required with such ease, veracity and appeal that I could not fail to follow her every speech and move with rapt attention, though what she acts concerns me hardly at all.

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Why, one might ask, does so excellent an actress choose to appear in so inconsiderable a vehicle?

The answer is that an actor must *act*! The present disastrous economic condition of the theatre makes this far more difficult than it might seem. Very few meritorious new scripts are available. In England, many of the best actors are part of the British National or the Royal Shakespeare Theatre companies, with repertories of both old and new plays of high caliber. Revivals attract the British public; here they are generally even more expensive to produce (because more elaborate) than the usual small-cast, one-set play of today's stage and, unless they enlist the service of an extraordinary popular star, are sure to lose money. Old plays are thus confined to sporadic Off-Broadway productions, where the salaries are necessarily very low, or to subsidized university and "regional" theatres, along with the well-intentioned offices of the Lincoln Center complex—where "top" actors rarely play.

These circumstances have brought about an ever increasing unwillingness on the part of our most renowned players to appear on the stage. They wait for "great" plays or sure-fire hits. Since it is not easy for actors to determine what script fits in either of these categories, they become almost neurotically choosy, and retire to the safety of film or television activities. There may, of course, be good acting in those media, but they are no substitute for the stage, which offers a greater artistic challenge and a deeper and more extensive exercise of the actor's most valuable gifts. Compared to the better actors in England, most of our stage stars become obsolete as actors.

So Julie Harris engages herself in whatever more or less respectable plays are offered her. And she is right to do so. It is the way of the best actors throughout theatre history. To be a good actor one must use oneself as an actor rather than as a contractor in safe securities.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, is a very funny show. It provides an abundance of heedless and headless laughter, which at times may be considered the best kind (Lunt-Fontanne Theatre).

It is related to old-time burlesque, before striptease burlesque (which was a product of the depression), in the days when its performance could be enjoyed by the *family*. The vitality of the show is in its book and the direction by its co-author Burt Shevelove. The new production has a less extraordinary cast than the original one in 1962, which included the fabulous clowns Zero Mostel and David Burns, but the present roster—in which Larry Blyden is outstandingly charming as well as hilarious—works well and evokes as many yoks as those of yore. Also of the company is Lew Parker but, due to illness, he was unable to appear when I saw the show on its second night. Phil Silvers is most engaging in his bespectacled Broadway bonhomie, like the bright fellows in the bars, delicatessen restaurants, byways and merchandising emporia of midtown Manhattan. He is simply not as fantastically "out of the world" as Mostel.

Still I must confess that I laughed more on this occasion than at the former one. I can only ascribe this difference to the fact that my frivolity increases with age. I am more eager to see this revival succeed than, let us say, Richard Burton's *Hamlet*! □

MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

The temptation to compose an obituary notice for the twenty-two years of Rudolf Bing's management of the Metropolitan Opera is severe, and only partially alleviated by the evidence that the successor administration appears to recognize certain major deficiencies in current operation. (The most conspicuous and encouraging piece of such evidence is, of course, the appointment of two professionals in key positions of musical responsibility: Rafael Kubelik as music director and James Levine as principal conductor.) But the history of the Bing regime suggests that a new management needs little help in spotting the flaws of the past; what is difficult is to perceive one's own limitations before they have become crippling.

With a little effort, one can recall the fresh air that swept through the Met in 1950; changes were made, and many things were indeed better than they had been. Eventually, severe anemia on the podium, elephantiasis of the scenery, and arteriosclerosis of the repertory set in, as enthusiastic amendment of the oversights of the 1940s became an end in itself. By the 1960s, when most of the necessary scenic refurbishment had been accomplished and times were flush, the possibility of moving in new directions was foregone in favor of aggravating the retrogressive side of existing policies: diva worship, visual extravagance and an aesthetic *status quo* (and further, the embodiment of this *status quo* in the structure and décor of the new Lincoln Center house, where it remains to plague future generations). In the end, we have musical performances on a level not greatly different from those of Johnson's later years. To be sure, they are housed much more expensively, and that may have served temporarily to *épater* a certain segment of *haute bourgeoisie* into offering financial support, but a public so easily dazzled must also be frequently dazzled or it will lose interest, especially in times of economic difficulty.

In the context of such an analysis, the most predictable pitfall for Gentele and his associates may well be the drive to attract a new and politically visible clientele that will support the allocation of federal and state arts funds for the Metropolitan's general expense budget (at present, such funds are given only for the park concerts and for educational projects). Given the present evidence that the relevant governmental agencies are more frequently impressed by the size and character of an organization's audience than by the artistic quality of its work, the temptation could be great to dilute standards in favor of a kind of "opera" palatable to the

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masses. Since such an abdication of responsibility would be visibly different from the present one, it might conceivably fool some observers, but the result would be as damaging in the long run. Somewhere between the antediluvian impulses of the present board of directors and the chaos of masscult lies the path that Gentele must find.

In the meantime, June will bring the final gesture of the Bing regime, a three-week "festival" of Verdi operas, to coincide with an international congress of Verdi scholars—hardly the ideal public upon which to inflict such questionable exhibits as the truncated edition of *La Forza del destino* locally current. Sadly, this year's musically brilliant version of *Luisa Miller*—an opera that even Verdi scholars do not often encounter—will not be shown. The latest entry in the Bing Verdi record is a new *Otello*, which exemplifies the distance things have traveled at the Metropolitan since the famous *Don Carlo* of twenty-two years ago (see *The Nation*, November 1, 1971), for it is yet another overproduction, and inadequately staffed on the musical side. Franco Zeffirelli's sets are at least handsome in an old-fashioned way, but the staging is full of gimmicks: throughout Act II, Iago busily pursues the trade of librarian, opening cases and organizing the Moor's books and papers, apparently with the purpose of underlining the speed of the plot's development ("hardly even time to unpack"—get it?). But Verdi's music should be sufficient to convey this urgency, so why bother with this essentially literary device (which, irrelevantly, concentrates the viewer's attention on Otello's otherwise unsuspected activities as a bookworm), impeding rather than assisting the establishment of a clear relationship between Otello and Iago? And what quirk of character enables a Iago who flees in terror before Otello's epileptic fit at the end of Act III to kill his wife Emilia at the opera's end? The two actions seem mutually incompatible to begin with, and in any case neither is allowed by Verdi's music (let alone Boito's stage directions).

Perhaps some of this will vanish in time, and we shall still have the effective sets when a taut and convincing hand takes over the podium. Karl Böhm, who was concurrently leading *Salome* as if it were a symphonic poem (almost all the singers were consistently inaudible), gave us the slackest *Otello* within memory, offering no support to the cleanly sung but tensionless protagonist of James McCracken or the ample-voiced, as yet not subtle Iago of Sherrill Milnes. Teresa Zylis-Gara was the sympathetic but under-the-note Desdemona, and the vagaries of balance in ensembles gave undue prominence to some of the capable minor singers; the chorus was, as usual, weak and sloppy. (The June performances will be led by Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, but next season Levine may be expected to raise the temperature a good deal.)

Another Zeffirelli production recently on view, and returning in June, is *Falstaff*, where the often frantic activity jars less because used, in rudimentary ways, to underline theatrical and musical contrasts. Still, the overloaded final scene is an impediment to action and ensemble, and the timing of sight gags is hardly what it was when the production was new. Both visually and audibly, the lack of adequate rehearsal for this finely tuned score was embarrassingly obvious, and one hopes that conductor Christoph von Dohnanyi will be given a more suitable opportunity in the future. □

A DESIRE TO FLY AND LOCK FINGERS

Let the gold go.
Let it be free.
Let it flow over mountains
and coat trees.
Let it out of the city.
Release it from the safes and banks.
Let it run from the vaults like a glimmering river.
It shouldn't be kept
for a few women's necks
or one man's wrist watch.

It's fear of the absence of oranges
and wheat
that keeps the gold a prisoner from the streets.
It's songs about ashes
and birds kept in cages,
it's clothes hiding bodies from faces
that keeps the gold in heat.

Let the gold go free.
Let it pour over me melted.
Bake it in a pie
and chew it with fury.

It's the garden wandering like a lost man
in the midst of the city,
it's the apple tree we've discriminated against
and banned from our neighborhood
that could be here wearing golden apples
giving us what we came to earth to get.

Daniela Gioseffi

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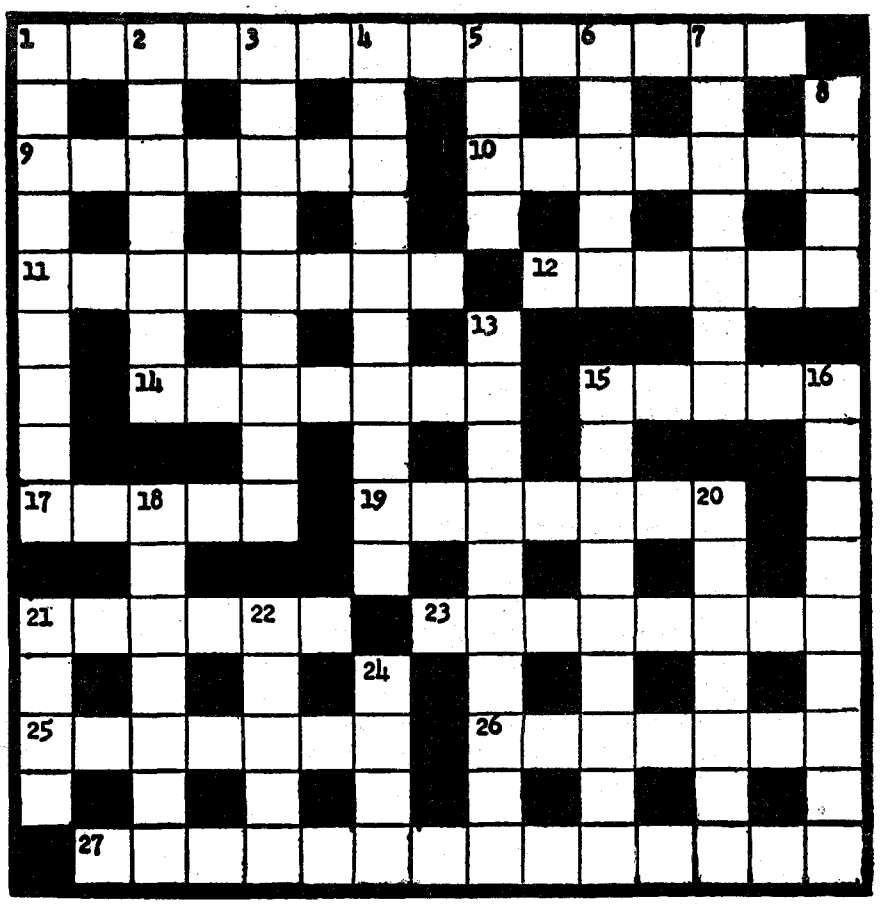

ACROSS

1 O, it might be a form of business! (8,6)
9 Running one of those things around the calf? (7)
10 Bunting-like? (7)
11, 5 down and 21 across In the old days it might have consisted of taking off one's girdle, but certainly not now! (6,10,8)
12 The real thing to stop up the machine might be a movie. (4,4)
14 Certainly not far eastern. (7)
15 and 21 down The game might be up, if the implication is you want to look for a new partner. (9)
17 and 6 down There was no head of the board here, though it might be of some discussion nowadays. (5,5)
19 It fits the Desert Fox to a T, to sort things out. (7)
21 See 11 across.
23 8 might be this bit. (6)
25 Saw how the dresses fitted, perhaps, and then changed into red. (5,2)
26 In the hospital do they sound as though they work on rotating shifts? (7)
27 Describing how matchless parts might be put together? (14)

DOWN

1 Hope-dasher? (4,5)
2 The prevailing system concerning the soldier and other people? (7)
3 Getting together with Jack, perhaps, as many a worker might show. (5,4)
4 Could its chew be accused of wool-gathering? (4)
5 See 11 across.
6 See 17 across.
7 As part of the answer, it really should be found in Africa. (7)
8 and 24 down Proving the poet might be expected to take a bit to the bank. (8)
13 Relevancy. (10)
15 Mutually advantageous, naturally! (9)
16 How one might be forbidden to go non-local? (9)
18 Discloses it could be really bad to have a sort of shiner around it. (7)
20 Is the clue in 1 across so unimaginative? (7)
21 See 15 across.
22 That crazy morning Ethel Merman wanted to be called? (5)
24 See 8 down.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1437

ACROSS: 1 and 15 Washington Square; 6 Ambo; 10 Imposed; 11 Integer; 12 Phosphorescent; 14 Retiring; 16 Nearby; 18 Demoniac; 22 Filling station; 24 Rotates; 25 Alidade; 26 Sack; 27 Government. DOWN: 1 Whispering; 2 Support; 3 Insuperability; 4 Gadroon; 5 Oliver; 7 Magenta; 8 Oars; 9 Stock quotation; 13 Descendent; 17 Asiatic; 19 Enslave; 20 Imitate; 21 Unesco; 23 Ores.

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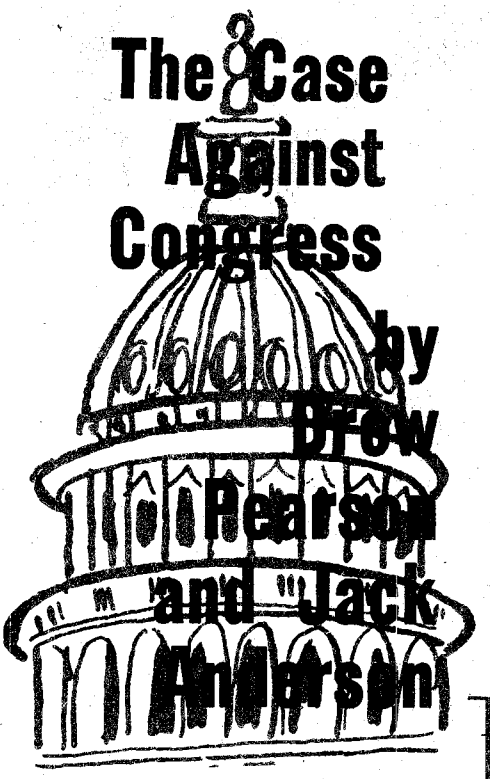

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